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Archibald Ellis Baker

VOICES FROM THE YOUNGER CHURCHES



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Edited by

ROY J. McCORKEL

*Chairman, Literature Committee
Student Volunteer Movement*

Published for the
STUDENT VOLUNTEER MOVEMENT
by
FRIENDSHIP PRESS
NEW YORK

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THE STUDENT VOLUNTEER MOVEMENT

Printed in the United States of America

1287604

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

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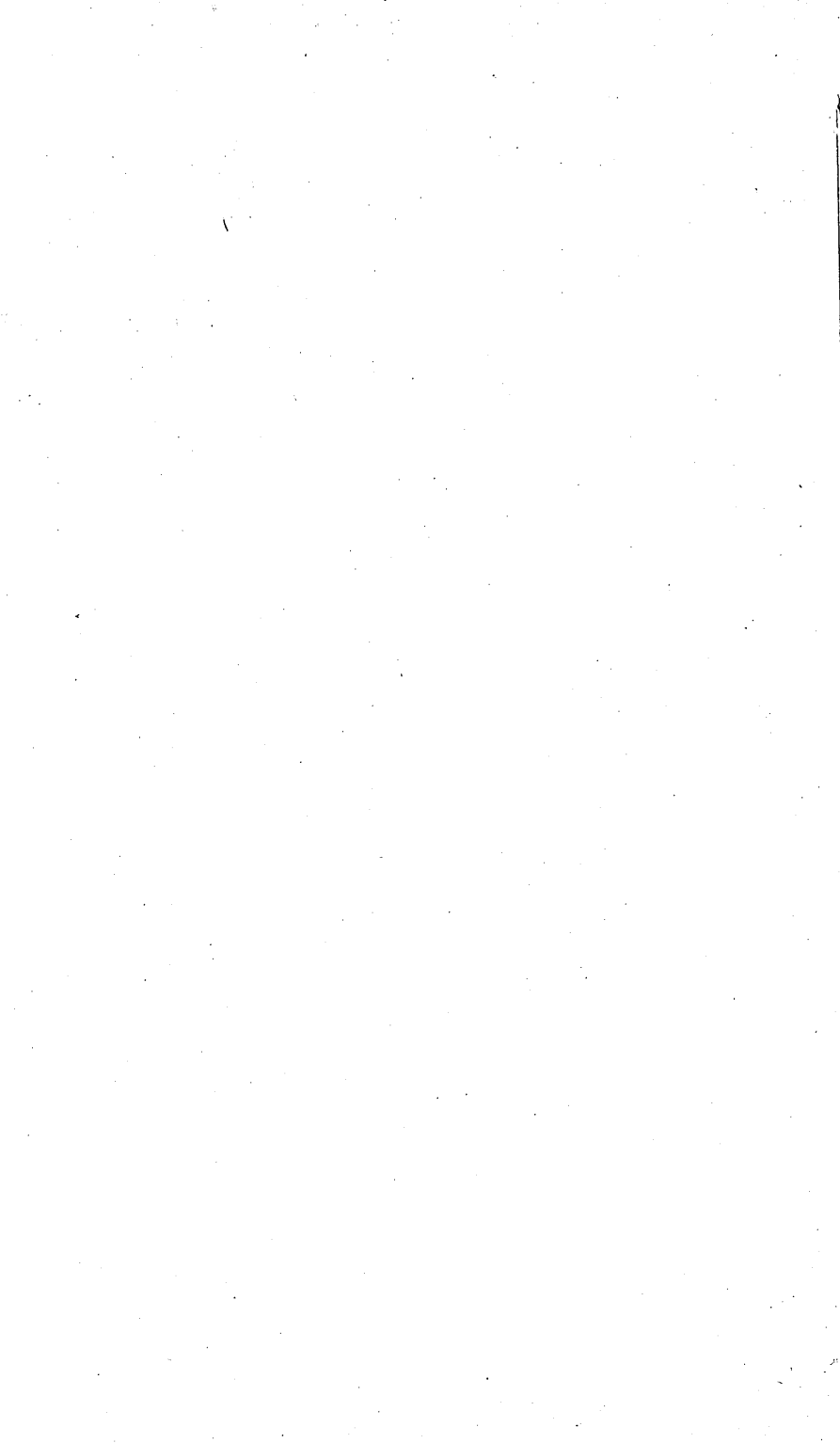
Sircar speaks not only for the Christian students of India, but also for the larger student population and the women of India.

GONZALO BÁEZ CAMARGO is executive secretary of the National Council of the Evangelical Churches of Mexico, and general secretary for religious education in Mexico. He was born in Oaxaca City in 1899. He studied at the Methodist Boys' School in Puebla, and at the Union Theological Seminary in Mexico City. Since graduation he has served as rural pastor and as professor and vice-president of the Methodist Boys' School in Puebla. He has been associated with all major aspects of evangelical activity in Mexico and throughout Latin America. Repeated journeys have taken him to conventions of the World's Sunday School Association in Brazil and Norway; to meetings of the International Missionary Council at Herrnhut, Germany, 1930, and at Madras, India, 1938; to the Student Volunteer Convention, 1935, and the International Council of Religious Education Convention, 1938, in the United States. He has written several texts on religious education, which are widely used in Latin America. He provides a regular column to one of the Mexico City dailies and is editor of *Luminar*, a quarterly magazine for the educated classes.

SAMPSON U. ETUK came to the United States in 1939 to continue his graduate studies in Teachers College, Columbia University. Born in Nigeria in 1903, he received his early educational training in Etinan Institute and the government college at Bonny, Owerri Province, Nigeria. He has taught in the mission school at Etinan, as well as in the government schools at Abak and Ikot Ekpene, Nigeria. He has served as state supervisor of mission schools in Calabar Province, Nigeria. During 1938-1939 he studied at the Institute of Education, London University.

HACHIRO YUASA, the former president of Doshisha University, Kyoto, Japan, was a delegate to the International Missionary

Council meeting at Madras. At its conclusion he traveled throughout North America, carrying the message of that gathering to Christian groups on this continent. He was born in Tokyo, Japan, in 1890. Following his studies in the Doshisha Middle School he spent some years in America as a student. His studies in America included work at the Kansas State Agricultural College and at the University of Illinois, which granted him a degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Entomology, in 1920. He has pursued graduate studies in science at the University of Illinois, and served as research entomologist with the State Natural History Survey of Illinois. From 1924 to 1934 he was professor of entomology at Kyoto Imperial University. From 1935 to 1937 he was president of Doshisha University, the largest Christian college in Japan.



FOREWORD

THE Christian faith has taken root among all peoples. Everywhere across the world young churches have sprung up. They possess a remarkable number of able, forward-looking leaders. One product of the missionary movement of the past one hundred and fifty years is this family of churches around the world. The future of the world mission of Christianity does not belong to the older churches of the Western world, but must be planned and carried out by the whole family of churches.

Voices have come to us for decades now, speaking of the implications of Christian faith to the members of one race and another. Now the voices of responsible leaders of the younger churches speak to us with convincing force. Following the conference of the International Missionary Council at Madras, India, at Christmas, 1938, leaders of these younger churches toured throughout the length and breadth of the Western world. Their presence was a testimony to the reality of the world Christian fellowship; their thought was convincing, and their leadership manifestly unexcelled. In the present volume respected leaders of the younger churches of China, India, Japan, Latin America, and Nigeria speak to us. Each tells something of the begin-

nings of Christianity in his country, something of its present influence, and finally the problems with which his church is confronted. There is much here to stimulate the imagination. Out of the sympathetic understanding of the real concerns of these and other leaders will come new vision of the possibilities of Christianity in our world. This volume will lead the reader into real fellowship with the problems of the young and vigorous churches of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

PAUL J. BRAISTED

*General Secretary
Student Volunteer Movement*

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CHRISTIANITY IN CHINA



CHRISTIANITY IN CHINA

BY P. C. HSU

CHRISTIAN people are often fond of using military terminology. In 1922 a survey volume was published entitled *The Christian Occupation in China*. Others would probably not have hesitated to use the term "Christian conquest." Now, in the light of history, we have to say that China has never been conquered, though she has been occupied to a certain extent by Christianity. For this relative but real failure, there are some very definite reasons.

A Christian legend has it that when Valignier, a Jesuit missionary, tried to enter China at the end of the sixteenth century, he was prevented from so doing and was compelled to stay on a small island off the coast of South China. As he looked out through his windows to the mainland, he was said to have cried out on his death-bed: "O Rock, when wilt thou open to the gospel?" And he died with a heavy heart. Why? Because before him, Christianity had already made two attempts, and both had failed. As early as the beginning of the seventh century came the Nestorians. They existed for two centuries and then disappeared. In the

thirteenth century came the Franciscans, and they evaporated after a century and a half. Valignier was sad because he felt that his mission was foredoomed to failure.

Now one apparent reason why the Nestorians and the Franciscans had failed was because they made no attempt to win the ruling classes of China. To remedy this, Matteo Ricci, a disciple of Valignier, pursued a very different tactic. At first he thought China was a Buddhist country. So he donned Buddhist robes and began to cultivate the friendship of the Buddhist monks. Before long, however, he realized his mistake. So he began to wear the costumes of Confucian scholars, studied their classics, and made friends with them. Besides, he introduced Western science and scientific inventions into China, such as astronomy and clocks. Thus he succeeded in winning over a number of Chinese scholars and high officials. It was said that when he died in Peking, a large number of court officials and scholars attended his funeral service. This policy of Ricci's was followed faithfully and with success by his successors, among whom Schall and Verbiest were names well known.

The attitude of the Jesuits toward Chinese culture was liberal throughout. They allowed their converts to continue ancestor worship and reverence for the sage Confucius, as well as for the Emperor. This, however, did not please their Franciscan and other colleagues. Quarrels over this and also over the proper term for God soon began, and appeals were made by both parties to

the Pope in Rome as well as to the Chinese Emperors. At last when one of the Popes ruled against the continuation of the practice of ancestor worship among Christians, the reigning Emperor was so angry that he put an imperial ban on Christianity altogether. Though this did not entirely exterminate Christianity, yet it certainly made the work of Christian propaganda very difficult. When Robert Morrison, the first Protestant missionary, came to China after a century or more, the ban was not yet lifted. It took him long years before he got his first convert.

Herein lies the first temptation of the early missionaries. If the Emperor had the political power to suppress the spreading of Christianity, why not overcome this difficulty by bringing greater political power to bear? So, beginning with the Opium War of the forties and down to the sixties, as a result of a series of defeats inflicted upon China, humiliating treaties were forced on her, and in these treaties were incorporated the so-called Toleration Clauses, which made possible the establishment of the Christian church first in treaty ports and later in the interior. It is now a generally known fact that the early missionaries, both Catholic and Protestant, who acted as interpreters when these treaties were made, had a very definite hand in the insertion of the Toleration Clauses.

So the door of the heathen and stubborn China was finally forced open to the Christian gospel! And why not? Did the missionaries not come with a good inten-

tion? Was the gospel not the word of God, which contained the way of salvation for the soul? If the Chinese accepted the gospel on their own accord, all well and good. Otherwise, let it be forced down their throats! A doctor had sometimes to do the same for the patient. A missionary was, after all, no other than a spiritual doctor. Thus the early missionaries must have reasoned.

As Christianity came in the wake of gunboats and embodied in treaty stipulations, the movement gradually gathered false momentum. Educational institutions started by missions made attendance at Bible classes and religious exercises compulsory. Missionaries, especially Catholics, interfered with litigations, with the result that Christians always won their lawsuits. This apparent success, however, only served to sow the seed of deep-seated hate against Christianity. Riot after riot broke out, which culminated in the Boxer uprising in 1900. The Boxer uprising was of course a sad event, for it was nothing more than a conglomeration of religious superstition and political fanaticism. But if we bear in mind the historical antecedents, it was perfectly understandable.

The story of the anti-Christian movement did not end with the Boxer uprising. Twenty years later it was to appear again in a very different form. The sponsors of the movement this time were educated people, the intelligentsia of the nation. The irony of history was that most of the leaders of the movement were products of mission schools! Again it was understandable, if we bear

in mind the fact that religious education in mission schools was compulsory and the fact that it was the period when China witnessed the rise of nationalism and communism.

The above, I believe, is an accurate, though one-sided, historical statement which constitutes a serious indictment. The indictment is that the entire methodology was wrong, and this wrong methodology was in turn due to an imperfect conception of the Christian religion. Christianity is a religion of love, which determines not only its spirit and purpose but also its methods. A religion of love cannot be spread by the method of force. Means and ends must coincide. Otherwise we invite tragic failures. One reason why Christianity had not met with greater failure is that this reliance on force was not generally shared nor universally practised. The evangelists, the doctors, and the educators were mostly men and women who had the spirit of love, devotion, and self-sacrifice, and so were able to transcend and overcome the difficulties due to the general set-up of mission work, and to build up a good foundation for a Christian movement in China.

It was quite clear that the first missionaries were only interested in saving the souls of the heathen Chinese, but they soon became aware of other types of needs, and doctors, educators, and later social workers and even agriculturists were added to the staff. To be sure, the idea of saving souls persisted even among the doctors, but it was gradually modified by the new idea that

health, education, social reform, and agriculture have a value of their own quite apart from the Christian gospel or conversion. All those who are familiar with *Re-Thinking Missions* will have no difficulty in understanding the shift of position.

In any case, the Christian missions in China have succeeded in establishing not only a large number of churches and chapels, but also hospitals, schools, social and even scientific institutions. They were responsible for initiating many lines of social reform, such as anti-footbinding, anti-girl slavery, and temperance work. Though quite unconsciously, they may in a real sense be regarded as pioneers or forerunners of several of our modern movements, such as rural reconstruction, literary revolution, and mass education. The work of the Christian mission in uplifting womanhood and upholding the single standard of sex morality was well known; and at the end of the last century when China wanted to carry out political reforms, it was the Christian Literature Society that furnished much of the literature.

So the Christian movement has been steadily growing in spite of its initial mistakes and many historical vicissitudes. The latest Protestant census shows that the Protestant population has already passed the half million mark, and the Catholics claim to have reached three million. That the Christian religion has played a rather important part and will continue to do so in the life of the nation now looks fairly certain.

But in the last analysis the task of the Christian mis-

sion is primarily one of inter-cultural relationship. What is the nature and function of the Christian gospel? In what way is it different from Chinese culture? Is the gospel needed by China? How can we make it acceptable to her? These are some of the questions we must consider.

Now from the point of view of cultural analysis, the difference between Christianity and Chinese culture is very great. Christianity is theistic; whereas Chinese culture is humanistic. Christianity holds a realistic view of sin and suffering; whereas the Chinese view toward sin and suffering is phenomenalistic and non-metaphysical. Christianity holds that man cannot achieve his own salvation and that he needs the supernatural salvation which comes from above; whereas the Chinese believe that man can save himself through human effort.

To elaborate on these points would require a long treatise, but in this brief article a few salient points may not be out of place. Ancient China did seem to have a theistic belief which was an approximation of the Old Testament idea. Even Confucius himself seemed to possess a vivid personal religious faith, but it was he who started a rational and agnostic trend, which has been followed almost down to this day. Early Taoism of Laotzu and Chuangtzu definitely rejected teleology, and Buddhism was frankly atheistic.

The explanation of this non-theistic and impersonalistic view of the universe is to be found partly in Chinese naturalism and partly in Chinese humanism. Laotzu and

Chuangtzu regarded nature as the prototype of goodness. *Summum bonum* meant the following of the spontaneous ways of nature. But, at the same time, nature has no purpose and is not personal. This naturalism was shared in part by Confucius, though he gave a much greater place to human effort. According to Confucianism, human nature is inherently good, and evil is due to lack of knowledge and wrong moral practice. Therefore education and good morals and government are all that is necessary to bring about the desired end. The sage set a perfect example for mankind to follow, and every person is a potential sage. One of the early Confucian philosophers, Hsuntzu, did maintain that man was born bad, but that did not stop him from going on to say that the men on the street can become sages through education, self-cultivation, and good government. The Neo-Confucianists of the Sung dynasty did give a metaphysical interpretation to account for the rise of evil, but this did not lead them either to the doctrine of original depravity or to that of divine redemption. Different as the Buddhist view of the universe and life was from traditional Chinese views, it yet shared the Chinese humanistic view to the extent that it believed in the efficacy of human intellect. According to Buddhism, life is evil and unreal, and salvation lies in seeing through the vicious circle between desire for birth and inevitable death.

Though Christianity has lent itself to divergent interpretations, yet it ought to be quite apparent that there

is a vast difference between the central teachings of Christianity and of Chinese culture. When Christianity comes into contact with Chinese culture, the Chinese mind inevitably asks the following questions: Does God exist? Has the universe a purpose? Is not human nature inherently good? How can you prove that man is born bad? Even if he is bad or has the tendency to become bad, can he not better himself through education, self-cultivation, good mores, and government? Is divine redemption really necessary? How can you prove that Christ died for our sin?

Then a different set of questions may sometimes arise. A non-Christian Chinese would say that as he compares the history, both secular and religious, of China with that of the West, he does not feel that there is much in the West that he would envy. He is willing to admit that the spirit of Jesus Christ is fine, but he fails to see that he has been generally followed either by the so-called Christian churches or Christian nations. Did not the Christian churches indulge in religious persecutions, religious wars, e.g., Crusades and inquisitions? Did not the Christian nations become imperialistic and exploit the weaker nations and races—and do they not do this even now? He would probably point out the fact that the religious history of China is conspicuous for its absence of religious persecutions and wars. Then he is too level-headed to believe in the practicability of Christ's teaching of loving one's enemies, and he cannot help giving an inward laugh when he reads about the unreserved

exhibition of hate of the so-called Christian nations toward each other during the European War, for he is making a mental note that during the present war between China and Japan, the Chinese have not failed to distinguish Japanese imperialism from Japanese people, and that in so doing the Chinese have remained faithful to the Confucian teaching of returning evil with justice.

Now to answer these and other similar questions is the task of the Christian mission, and the task is difficult. In this connection a slight digression may be profitably made. I refer to the way in which Buddhism succeeded in getting itself thoroughly established in China. As we all know, Buddhism originally came from India, and the spirit of its teachings was diametrically opposed to that of China. Confucianism accepted the universe and life, whereas Buddhism denied both. Confucianism was this-worldly, whereas Buddhism was other-worldly. Even early Taoism, though much more transcendental than Confucianism, never was other-worldly. This being the case, the question becomes all the more instructive—How did Buddhism ever succeed in getting itself accepted? Well, the following are some of the answers.

In the first place, Buddhism came at a time when there was a great deal of political disorder and uncertainty. At such a time the other-worldliness of Buddhism had its appeal. Then for a period of four or five centuries Buddhist laymen and priests undertook perilous journeys through Chinese Turkestan and over the Himalaya Mountains in order to study Buddhism at first hand in India.

Last but not least was the fact that many Buddhists lived a life of devotion and self-denial. They never yielded themselves to the temptation and policy of the gunboat or treaty stipulations. The literature they produced was in most cases of exquisite style, and it actually opened a new era in the literary history of China. The influence of Buddhism permeated Chinese literature, art, philosophy, and religion. Not only that, the Chinese Buddhists had the courage to expand and develop the ideas of Buddhism. The whole idea of Bodhisattva as the one who voluntarily defers his entry into Nirvana so that he may save all the sentient beings was unknown to Hinayana Buddhism and even today has remained a closed book to Buddhists in the Hinayana countries. The New Ch'an Buddhism as developed by Wei-nung and the Pure Land sect, as well as other concepts, were all products of the Chinese mind.

There is no question whatsoever in my mind that Christianity will have to undergo a similar process before it can get itself thoroughly established in China. The position held by Professor Kraemer of Leiden in his book *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World* may be a thoroughly tenable one, but I do not think it is going to yield much fruit. He insists, as the reader will remember, that the Christian gospel is directly from God and is therefore entirely different from other religions; and that, though Christian missionaries may make use of some non-Christian religious terminology and other forms as means to an end, yet there can really be

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no true contact between the Christian gospel and the other religions. So even the very best of non-Christian religions is not to be regarded as preparation for the Christian gospel. Whereas this view may lend support to Christian conviction, it definitely tends to make open-minded study of non-Christian religions and free intercourse between Christian religions and non-Christian religions difficult if not impossible. Furthermore, the holder of this view cannot help toning down the doctrine of general revelation. Though as Christians we may all concede to the doctrine of special revelation in Christ, yet we all have to face honestly the fact of God's general revelation in non-Christian religions. God either reveals himself in these religions or he does not. We have no right to give God something by one hand and take it away by the other. If God does reveal himself in these religions, then there is a great deal to be said in favor of the position for mutual sharing advocated by *Re-Thinking Missions*.

During the past few decades, a movement toward indigenization of Christianity has been started, including efforts to indigenize religious art, literature, thought, and forms of worship. But on the whole, the work has only barely begun, and much of people's energy and attention has been directed toward self-support and self-propagation. The movement toward self-support is receiving a temporary set-back on account of the war, though there is no ground for despair. The Home Missionary Society, which is a definite expression of the

idea of self-propagation, has been doing good work in the frontier province of Yuan-nan and in Mongolia. The bulk of Christian literature is still translation and for some time to come it will probably remain as such.

One rather encouraging feature in the Christian movement in China is the movement toward organic unity. The Church of Christ, which comprises thirteen denominational groups and a little over one quarter of the total Protestant population, is not another denomination but a movement toward church unity. The principles of organization are such that any denominational group joining the movement may still retain its own forms of worship and church policy, and its own creedal requirement, if any. As a matter of fact, the Chinese Christians do not object to denominations as such, but they do object to the bitter feeling and lack of cooperation that have resulted from them. In addition to organic unity, the Christian movement has also been making headway toward cooperation, especially under the leadership of the National Christian Council.

The movement toward an indigenous and national Christian church, however, does not mean segregation from the historical and universal Christian church. The church, in order to remain Christian, must be historically continuous in time and universal in space. In other words, it must be ecumenical. That the Christian church in China stresses the ecumenicity of the church is evidenced by the fact that, in spite of the great handicaps it labored under, it sent the second largest delegation to

the recent Madras conference of the International Missionary Council. Most of the Chinese Christians believe that, in order to keep the ecumenical nature of the church, it would be desirable to send missionaries from one country to another so that a process of cross-fertilization may be kept going. For the time being it is only natural that the lands of older churches should send more missionaries to lands of younger churches. They further believe that the matter of finance in mission work is largely one of convenience. People contributing to Christian missions do so as offering to God and it does not necessarily follow that because the money has come from foreign countries therefore it must be controlled by the foreign mission.

On the whole, there is enough ground for satisfaction in view of the past achievement of the Christian church. In spite of its small numerical strength in China, it has been exerting an influence on the life of the nation way out of proportion to its numbers. It is a well-known fact that many of the outstanding leaders are professing Christians, and though Christianity in China is not experiencing anything like the mass conversion in India, yet there is today a general attitude of appreciation, and certainly we have not been hearing about the anti-Christian movement during the last ten years. What has brought about this remarkable change and what important lesson we may learn from this is what we must consider next.

I suppose we will all agree that the most important of

all Christian doctrines is that of incarnation, the Word made flesh. Now I believe that this task of incarnating the Word of God was not confined to Christ alone but was meant to be undertaken by every Christian. Thus in the Sermon on the Mount, we read: "So your light is to shine before men, that they may see the good you do and glorify your father in heaven." This may be called the doctrine of reincarnation. We have already said that a religion of love can only be spread by the spirit or method of love. We have also outlined the sort of questions that a non-Christian Chinese would probably ask when he comes into contact with Christianity. According to my thinking, most of these questions cannot be answered apart from this doctrine of reincarnating the Word of God. And this is exactly the thing which has brought about the change of attitude of the Chinese toward Christianity.

Ever since the outbreak of the war, Christians, both Chinese and foreign missionaries, have been foremost in giving relief to the refugees and the wounded in a most self-effacing way. On many occasions when the invading army came into cities, the foreign missionaries were there to protect the civilians, especially women and children, oftentimes endangering their own lives. One of the missionaries whom I know personally used to send daily accounts of the atrocities and crimes committed by the invading army to the Japanese ambassador in the city. It was the same missionary who, having made a personal investigation into the matter of drug traffic in and around

the Nanking area, exposed the facts in an article, pointing out the startling figure of five million dollars a month from such sales in that area alone. Yet this missionary is a pacifist and he has a genuine love for the Japanese. Such exhibitions of Christian courage and love by missionaries have certainly endeared them to the hearts of many non-Christian Chinese.

So the religion of love is being demonstrated, and in face of this concrete demonstration, how can the Chinese help taking Christianity more seriously than before? Yes, perhaps what the Christian gospel says about the reality of God and of man's sinfulness and of God's redemptive love is true. This is the way the practically minded Chinese would figure out the matter, and so they are ready to listen to the Christian gospel. This is why, since the outbreak of the war, there has been a general response of open-mindedness and receptivity. In both the so-called occupied areas and in free China, the churches are being overcrowded, indeed not necessarily for immediate acceptance of the faith, but certainly for inquiry. The open door toward the Christian gospel, prayed and worked for by the early missionaries, is actually here. And this time it was not forced open; it opened of its own accord.

If my reading of contemporary events is not far mistaken, and if this work of demonstrating Christian love can be multiplied and continued, we may be confidently looking forward to a new day for Christianity in China. In this connection, it may be well to recall the

conclusion of Mr. Chen Tuhsiu's article on "Christianity and the Chinese," written nearly twenty years ago. While the writer was very critical of organized Christianity, yet he concluded his article by saying that he wished that the lofty character and warm spirit of love and self-sacrifice of Jesus could be injected into the blood of the four hundred million Chinese.

Before concluding, a few remarks on the future and function of the new missionary may not be out of place. My recent visit to North America has convinced me that the day of large-scale recruiting for foreign missions is over, and I do not need to go into the reasons for this. From the point of view of the candidate or prospective candidate, the choice between the home field and foreign work is often very real, especially as he becomes more conscious of the unchristian character of aspects of the life of the so-called Christian churches and civilizations. For those who are convinced that their duty is to stay at home and do their bit, I have nothing to say. I have every respect for their convictions. But for those who have not so decided, I should like to say that the foreign field does offer a very challenging opportunity for you to invest your life and service. However, you must first face the question with God and yourself, whether you are qualified for this task, for the nature of the task of Christian missions has changed considerably, and a number of new qualities are now demanded of you.

In addition to a firm and clear conception of the Christian faith itself, are you prepared to learn from

non-Christian religions and cultures? Are you willing to be just associates or colleagues of a leadership which is increasingly being assumed by the Christians of the land you go to? After you have gone out to the field you may find yourself doing a piece of work which you may not particularly like; will you be willing to adjust yourself to the exigencies of circumstances and do it cheerfully? And when conditions do require you to assume leadership, will you be able to do so without self-conceit and pride? You see, I am laying special emphasis on dispositions and attitudes, because I believe these to be of greater importance than technical and specialized training. Indeed, much of your technical training needs to be adapted to local needs, and sometimes I wonder whether it is justifiable to require every candidate to invest three long years in theological training. At any rate, it would be worth while to consider the idea of the new missionary's being given much of his training in the field rather than at home.

Just one more word, and this concerning the needs of post-war China, needs which will be tremendous. She is going to need all types of workers for her post-war reconstruction. This fact, coupled with the fresh opportunities made possible by the new open door toward Christianity, ought to present a very challenging and attractive field of service to student volunteers of fine caliber.

THE INDIAN CHURCH



THE INDIAN CHURCH

BY ILA RAMOLA SIRCAR

THE church in India is the result of the mission enterprise of the churches in the West. We gratefully appreciate and value our rich heritage of a church paved by the prayers of millions, the interest and support of generations of Christians, and the devoted service of thousands of persecuted and self-sacrificing men and women of India and of the West.

The achievement of this mission enterprise cannot be measured only in terms of the numerical strength and the spiritual attainment of the Christian community in India. This enterprise has reached millions of people outside the church. It has pioneered in the field of modern education, medical work, and rural reconstruction. It brought life to millions of people who were associated with the depressed classes. It brought a new vision of the place of women in the home and in society, which perhaps affected the purdah system, child marriage, etc. This permeating influence outside the Christian community has gone on and will go on as an integral part of the Christian movement in India.

The history of India, besides being the history of a

religious people, is a history of invasions. Before the Moguls invaded India, the country wholly or in parts was governed by people actively identified with one or the other of Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, or Muslim religions. Though they gave preference to their own religious group at times, they were tolerant of the other groups. When the Moguls invaded India, Islam was becoming a popular religion in their country. Filled with the zeal for their religion, some of the rulers forced the people of India to accept Islam (Muslim religion). This religious oppression by the ruling class was not at all appreciated by the Indians, and so they became prejudiced against Islam.

Later, when the Mogul empire was declining, some European races, followed by the British, invaded India. Side by side with the invaders came the missionaries from different parts of the West. Christianity had already come to India, probably at the end of the third century, although for some time it did not spread beyond Travancore. A persistent tradition holds that the Apostle Thomas was the first missionary to India. The next clear record of missionaries dates from the thirteenth century, when some Catholic and Protestant missionaries came into the country. Being few in number their influence was limited.

Starting with the late seventeenth century, the mission enterprise increased and developed as means of communication developed, and because the mission enterprise, instead of being an individual or a small-group

enterprise, became a church enterprise. Unfortunately this happened side by side with the success of the British invasion, though there was little connection between the two. Since the missionaries all came from the West, the Indians could not discriminate between a missionary and a British conqueror. Some therefore thought that Christianity was related to the British conquest in exactly the same way that Islam was related to the Mogul regime. Hence they became as prejudiced against Christianity as they were against Islam. Others considered the mission enterprise as a part of British tactics to get the favorable interest and support of India, knowing that her people were loyal to their religious communities. In short, Christianity became associated in the minds of the people with British imperialism.

It was on account of prejudices like these that the early converts suffered persecution, particularly if they belonged to the higher status in society. The missionary, not wanting to see the new convert stranded in life, sheltered him in the mission compound. Thus, through force of circumstances, segregated and isolated from the rest of India, the Indian Christian developed what is sometimes contemptuously referred to as the "mission compound mentality." Though the mission compound was inevitable, the mentality could have been prevented.

Moreover, the early missionaries, in all sincerity, considered that they were going to enlighten a heathen world. Therefore, all religions that were already in India were considered heathen, and consequently customs,

traditions, and the way of life associated with these religions were also considered heathen. As a result, India accepted all that came with Christianity—Western culture, customs, denominations—as an integral part of Christianity.

This adoption of Western culture and the developing of a mission compound mentality convinced a majority of the non-Christians that Christianity was an integral part of the British Government, which, not being satisfied with its conquest, was now attempting to denationalize Indians by offering them, a religious people, Western imperialism and culture in the garb of a religion. Therefore, in presenting the message of the gospel to those outside the church, we have had not only to deal with people who on account of centuries of religious background have set ideas of their own, who profess other faiths and are genuine and sincere about what they believe, but we have had also to fight against that very undesirable and understandable prejudice.

The membership of the church in India has been drawn largely from the socially and economically underprivileged groups. Those who came from privileged groups were practically all disinherited, and so they joined the church with their economic roots cut off. Consequently, all converts were obliged to seek vocations that were unrelated to their past. At that time educational and medical work were being developed, so the Indian Christian tried to train himself with a view to entering these liberal professions. This process of being

educated in the modern sense of the word, and of adjustment to the new vocations and the non-Indian life, all took time. Hence it was only towards the end of the nineteenth century that the Christian community rose to its responsibility and started participating actively within the church. It can therefore be said that the church in India is a very young church.

The first creative expression of this coming of age of the Christian community resulted in the formation of the National Missionary Society, in 1905. Through this organization Christians in all parts of India, regardless of denominational and other differences, united in a common endeavor to evangelize the country. A little time later two other missionary societies were formed: the Indian Missionary Society of Tinnevely and the Syrian Church Missionary Society, and both these have worked in close cooperation with the National Missionary Society.

About the same time that the Christian community became conscious of its responsibility within the church, there started the political struggle for Indian independence which resulted in pride among the people in her heritage and culture. It did not take long for this appreciation of India's culture and heritage to permeate the church. This caused the Indian Christian to wonder if he had not made a mistake in accepting without controversy all that came with Christianity, instead of accepting only the concept of Christianity and then relating it to the life of India.

However, today efforts are being made to make the church indigenous, because we, as Christians in India, believe that no racial or national culture can be an integral part of Christianity. Moreover, we believe that it is the Indian Christian alone who can by his life and example prove to the non-Christian that Christianity has nothing to do with Western imperialism or culture, but that above all it is a religion with a message of salvation and a way of life associated with it. We realize that we cannot do this by transplanting on Indian soil Western culture, Western denominational churches, Western creeds, and Western interpretations of the gospel. We wish to plant only the seed—the gospel—and let the Indian soil with the help of the Creator bring to fruition a well-nourished, strong plant. It is only then that we will see the vision on the Mount of Transfiguration on Indian soil, and Jesus standing in the company of Indians—Christians and non-Christians.

Working towards this end and for a richer life of the church, efforts are being made to make the church life, its worship, leadership, and enterprises, as Indian as we can. Comfortable chairs in a place of worship, Western architecture, music, and other Western customs are so foreign to an average Indian that he feels he cannot truly worship in a Western church. Since worship must be essential in the life of a Christian and in the life of the Christian church, special emphasis is being laid on making the church worship more Indian. However, in our attempts to make the church indigenous we are not try-

ing to build a national church, but we are trying to make available to people places for individual and corporate worship in which an average Indian can worship in a way that will bring him nearest to God. This is not an easy task; therefore it presents a number of problems.

Some Christians believe that in the process of making the church indigenous we must discriminate carefully between that which is Indian and that which is Hindu or Muslim. According to their way of thinking, the Christian church must make an adaptation for itself of Indian architectures, art, etc. Others say that such discrimination is neither necessary nor desirable. These Christians believe that God, who loves his entire creation, must have continually and constantly revealed himself to all those who earnestly tried to seek him. He must, therefore, have revealed himself not only to the Jews and Hebrews but to the Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, and others, as well. They would say further that the fulfillment of all these revelations was in Christ, yet to many of us Indian Christians God first revealed himself through Hinduism, Islam, etc., depending upon which group one has been converted from. This helps us to accept the revelation in Christ. Since Christ has himself said that he has not come to destroy but to fulfill, we do not necessarily have to eliminate from our lives any part of that whole process of revelation, no matter how crudely we may have interpreted it. Therefore, in reference to the art and architecture they would say that we do not have to make an adaptation. We can accept it as it

is. They would also say that it is only as we view and comprehend the significance of this complete process of revelation that we will make a truly Indian and a truly Christian interpretation of the gospel for our time and our people, thereby enriching the life of the Church Universal.

However, though there is division of opinion on how much of our Indian culture should be introduced into the Indian church, all are agreed that it should be introduced. Therefore, without splitting the church up into smaller groups, action is taken according to the opinion of the congregation and in view of the non-Christian population in the vicinity.

Referring to the question of architecture, usually if there are a number of Hindus in a particular locality, the church is built either like a Hindu temple or as an adaptation of one. Of course, as has already been pointed out, art and architecture do not constitute the whole problem of organizing an indigenous church.

This effort toward a naturalized unity has divided the church into two distinct groups. For the same reason that an Indian finds it difficult to worship in a Western church, the Western people find it difficult to worship in an Indian church. Consequently, we have Indian and English churches. The membership of the latter consists of Anglo-Indians, British, Americans, and Europeans. The foreign missionaries try to identify themselves with both churches where this is possible, but there is seldom any other relationship between the two congregations.

Perhaps cooperation and greater realization of our common loyalty to the same God will eventually demonstrate to the non-Christians the unity behind the racial and cultural diversities instead of demonstrating, as it does now, that in Christ there *is* East and West.

According to the statistics of 1935, the Christian community of India numbers only 1.8 per cent of the total population. Besides the two divisions already referred to, this minority community is subdivided into several linguistic areas by reason of the various languages and dialects of India. Moreover, this community is drawn from various religious and cultural backgrounds. In addition, the present church in India comprises practically all the major denominations of America and Britain, and at least one denomination of the other countries that have sent out missionaries to India. As a result, this complexly constituted community has not yet been able to consolidate into one homogeneous unit. We realize that these differences have in some ways made the life of the church richer; but we also realize that there are drawbacks in such a set-up.

Perhaps the greatest drawback in these divisions is that they are a stumbling block to non-Christians. In the midst of communal rivalries, India's greatest problem is unity. Some non-Christians, therefore, suggest that we keep religion out of our lives; but there are others who wonder if there is any religion which could unite India. And when these think of Christianity and all the divisions within the church, they lose interest in the en-

tire concept. Last December one of India's greatest social reformers, a non-Christian, was asked if Christianity was not the solution to India's problems. He replied, "No!" and gave as his reason, "The Christians speak with a divided voice."

Looking at the situation from an economic point of view, we find that instead of having a few churches in each linguistic area with a fair-sized congregation, a well-trained and adequately paid ministry, a church that assumes responsibility for its poorer members, and that carries on the work of evangelization, we are now maintaining numerous churches each with a small congregation, its communicants for the most part living on or below the margin of self-support, and who are therefore unable to assume any financial responsibility or to develop Christian enterprises. Thus it is inevitable that the leadership and finance of the total Christian community has to be divided between the Indian and English churches. This divided responsibility is also inevitable between the linguistic area churches; at least it will be so until Hindustani in reality becomes the *lingua franca* of India.

But we do not have to divide these resources in perpetuating an artificial loyalty to Western denominations, which not being born of us mean nothing to us. In view of the fact that church divisions are a stumbling block to non-Christians, the only divisions which we could—perhaps through organic church unity—eliminate are the denominational divisions, for these do not concern

us. Yet the whole set-up is such that we cannot do this without the cooperation of those churches which helped to build up ours. Therefore we shall have to remain within the existing system and "wait like a chicken for a helpful peck or two from the hen on the shell which it is not able to break with its own tiny beak."

The church in India besides being a young church is a growing church. As a result of the mass movement evangelistic work, the membership of the church is growing at the rate of about four hundred a day—and this presents us with more problems.

In the first place, we do not have a sufficient number of trained leaders to look after this group. Moreover, the process of training takes a long time and we have not a sufficient number of places for training. Consequently, we have to depend on an untrained lay ministry of the church, which is not always available when needed. Such a situation is not very satisfactory, and it needs more consideration and attention.

In the second place, this increase in numbers is increasing the financial obligation of the church. It has already been explained that most of the churches are financially on or below the margin of self-support. Moreover, the support from the West has been considerably reduced during the last decade. Yet we believe that we should not stop evangelistic work on account of financial difficulties. The mind of these people from the rural areas and the unprivileged classes is open to Christianity today. How long their mind will remain open we do

not know. Therefore, believing that the Lord will provide, we are launching into this great evangelistic enterprise.

One of the immediate problems pertaining to this group is Christian literature. These new converts are practically all illiterate. We believe that literacy is an essential element in the life of a Christian. While efforts are being made to make the group literate—which in itself is a problem—we have hardly any Christian literature to pass on to them once they have become literate. The mission enterprise pioneered in educational work. The church, knowing that 90 per cent of India was illiterate, had also tried to build up a program for removing illiteracy. Part of this was done through the Student Christian Movement. Though we tried to work up these educational programs, we did not see sufficiently far ahead to encourage and develop talent which could meet the situation, as it has matured. Nevertheless, we can get some leadership to produce the literature; but we do not know yet how we can finance the rest of the process—the production and distribution of this Christian literature. One thing we do know, and that is that we must spend the little we have profitably, and without overlapping and waste. This is one of several reasons why India is clamoring for greater cooperation. This particular situation calls for a pooling of all denominational leadership resources and finance in each linguistic area for effective evangelism, and it calls for further cooperation with the Christian literature pro-

ducing agencies so as to get the best literary results with the few resources at hand.

It has already been pointed out that the church in India is a young church. It has grown barely old enough to tackle some problems within the church itself; and now it finds itself face-to-face with India's political situation. Though in the mind of a non-Christian, Christianity has always been identified with politics, in the mind of a Christian, politics is a closed book. Never having studied the relationship between his state and his religion, the average Christian is confused and on the whole hesitant to tackle the problems of the national situation. According to an enlightened non-Christian, India's freedom is not an end in itself, but a means to an end; and that is to "rescue the soul of India from decay, to reshape it, and to make it a fit instrument to serve the cause of humanity." These non-Christians, therefore, cannot understand how any religious community, particularly the Christian community, with its emphasis on individual personality, group personality, justice, and love, can refuse to participate in Indian Nationalism which makes such a modest claim. Since Christianity has been presented in India with its claim to be unique, the non-Christians are not only interested in the attitude and participation of an Indian Christian but they are also interested that the whole community which professes this unique religion support the cause of Indian Nationalism. At this time the whole community will have to act as Christians first and Indians, British, Americans, after-

wards. As Christians we are builders of the kingdom of God; therefore we cannot actively line ourselves up with any political party.

Yet we should courageously face every issue in the light of Christian principles. The Christian way is not the way of least resistance. Great harm has been done to the cause of Christianity by Christian Indians and foreigners, because of the inconsistency between religious belief and social action; and because of carelessness and indifference to things of importance. This Indian political situation presents problems to the foreign missionary as well as to the Indian Christian. Both need to look into the situation prayerfully and intelligently. There are several fields of service opening up. Since the church in India has had an experience of belonging to the Universal Church, it could help India maintain a balance between Nationalism and internationalism. Moreover, India is trying to develop social service and educational activities. The Christians can help by making available the valuable experiments and experience of both missionaries and churches in India and in other countries. The time has come, not for us to put aside politics, but to show how principles, policies, and methods of politics can and should be related to Christian principles. In short, if the church in India is to be a living and a witnessing church, it will have to prove the efficacy of its faith in the moral, spiritual, social, economic, and political realms.

Whatever shape Indian political situations may take, all religious communities have been vouchsafed freedom

of worship. We shall be permitted to read the Bible, and to worship in the church, but our evangelistic motives and enterprises stand challenged. The non-Christians in general feel that there is no place for Christian evangelism in a land of religions. Their objection is not so much to preaching the gospel as to conversions, because they believe that religion is a personal matter and they therefore disapprove of all forms of organized religion, particularly if these affect either society at large or other religious communities. Of course evangelism in India affects various religious communities, because every individual is associated with some religious community. Moreover, the enlightened non-Christian believes that under India's present social and economic conditions, conversions from the depressed classes can never be genuine. They have, therefore, very clearly stated that the Christians must stop their evangelistic enterprises.

It is not only the evangelistic enterprise itself that stands challenged but also activities which in effect are evangelistic; for example, the medical work. The good done by that enterprise is appreciated, but if anybody is called to Christ through it, it is termed "exploitation." Though it is recognized that the Christians have pioneered in the field of social service and philanthropic work, yet when there is something in that line which needs to be developed, the non-Christians hesitate to invite a Christian to undertake it lest he should use it as an opportunity to preach the gospel, which is called "propaganda for his community."

Every church has a twofold task: responsibility within the church—to develop the life of the church and to keep it from stagnation; responsibility outside the church—to make available to those outside the church the source of power and inspiration that can transform life. In view of this second responsibility, and realizing that in India we have more than one-fifth of the world's population, of which less than two per cent are Christian, we will have to take into consideration all the criticisms of the non-Christians. Ever since Christianity came into India, in the minds of the non-Christians there have been several misunderstandings regarding it. There is no reason why we should let these misunderstandings grow from bad to worse. If we are to handle them successfully, the church in the future will have to get out of its shell of exclusiveness and isolation and make more contacts with the non-Christians, study the relationship of a Christian to the non-Christians and his attitude to their faiths. Neither the attitude of exclusiveness and contemptuousness of each other's faiths, nor unfair prejudices will help the situation. We may have to reconsider the methods of evangelism. However, it is only as we make more contacts with each other that we will learn to know and understand each other's point of view. It is then and then alone that we will be able to explain effectively to non-Christians that in our efforts to evangelize we do only the preaching—conversions are the fruit of the Spirit.

If the church of the future is to be effectively evange-

listic, we shall have not only to relate Christianity to everyday problems and make more contacts with non-Christians, but we shall also have to rethink the relation of the foreign mission enterprise to the Indian churches. Though the missionaries as individuals associate with the Indians and the Indian churches, the organizational set-up is such that the enterprise is almost always associated with the American or British denominational churches in America and Great Britain. There is no doubt that most of what we have we owe to these churches. We acknowledge that fact and appreciate it. But for the sake of the innumerable non-Christians, we should like the mission enterprise in the future to be considered not as America, Britain, or another country serving India, but as the Church Universal serving those outside the organized church. If we all could take this attitude toward the mission enterprise, and try to weave it into our existing organizations, several of our problems, like an indigenous leadership, church unity, and denominational cooperation, would become less acute. We may have even to consider the place of the missionary in the whole enterprise. In view of the fact that the non-Christian defies the thought, movements, and enterprises of the West, the proper place for the missionary in India "may not be at the front nor at the back but at an arm's length." This can only be achieved if both parties realize that they are working together to serve the cause of Christianity.

The economic aspect of the church of the future does

not look very hopeful. It has already been shown that no church is financially as strong as it should be, because of various divisions and the mass movement evangelistic enterprise. Moreover, unemployment is increasing because there are more trained people for some of the popular professions than there are vacancies. Also, the Indian Christian has not been farsighted enough to avail himself of other channels of service that are opening up. And, in some provinces, on account of our new governmental set-up, employment is given according to the size of the community to which one belongs. Since 1.8 per cent of India's population is Christian, few Christians are now being employed in Government service, and this is also adding to our problem of unemployment. So far, practically all the mission and other schools and colleges have been given subsidies from the Government. Today the Indian Congress has said that in view of the fact that 90 per cent of India is still illiterate and money is scarce, higher education must become a private enterprise. We do not know whether the mission institutions, in which Indian Christians have been working, will be able to maintain themselves. If not, that will further increase unemployment. The non-Christians look at a Christian with great suspicion and disgust on account of his indifference to some of the outstanding problems of India. Therefore, the non-Christian does not feel very sympathetic towards Christians, and we cannot blame him. One, therefore, cannot foretell what chances an Indian Christian will have with regard to employment in the

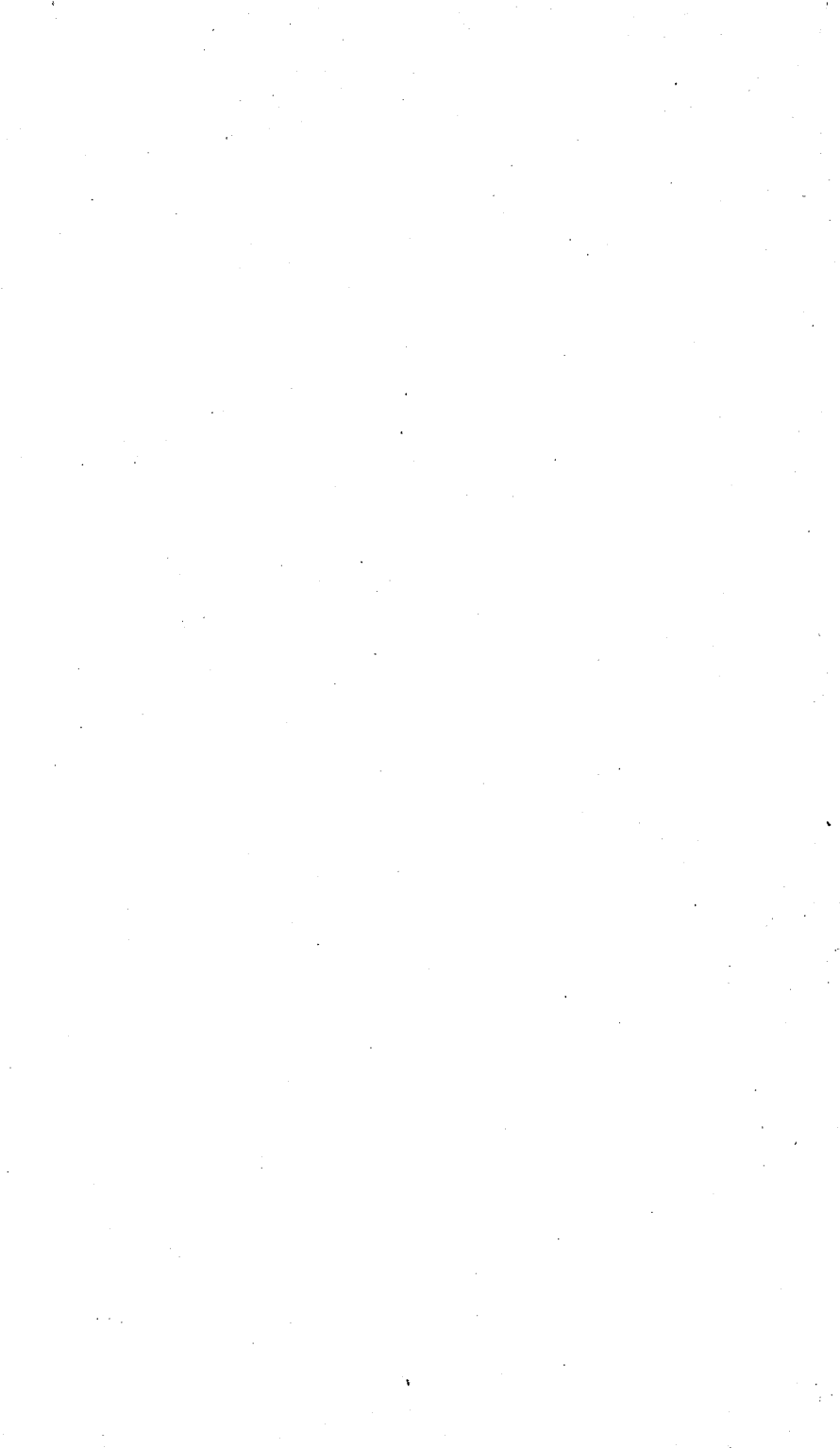
future. Much will depend on his own attitude towards the modern problems in India.

One of the several benefits the mission enterprise conferred upon us was that it gave us a concept of the Church Universal. But we Christians, all over the world, failed to realize that we were all bearing witness in a non-Christian world. When looking at the world situation, the non-Christian wonders what part religion has played in it. He wonders why Christianity, the religion professed by the West, has not affected war, exploitation, injustice, and imperialistic motives. He wonders if an average Christian is better than an average non-Christian; and if an average Christian community is a better community. He wonders how Christianity, which brings a revolutionary change in the minds of common people, does not bring about the same radical change in social relationships after a certain stage is reached. He wonders how Christianity, which brought life to the millions of depressed classes, could not tackle the racial and class discrimination within the church. He wonders how Christianity, which brought the sanctity of home, has not tackled the increase in divorce rate within and outside the Christian community, and so on. Thus the non-Christian is challenging the life of the Church Universal. Christianity loses its claim to be unique if those that profess it cannot prove the validity of its uniqueness by living up to the principles that make it so. Several place Christianity on the same level as the non-Christian faiths, for whereas in the latter such principles do not exist, they

do in the former but are impotent. Not all the bright patches of mission enterprise or church history are indicative to a non-Christian of the power and inspiration of Christianity. All he wants for a proof is whether an average Christian is a better man. Is he?

Today we cannot stand behind the good work of someone else and proclaim Christianity; we are "left alone in the company of the Lord" to prove afresh to those outside the Church Universal the reality and power of our faith. We cannot do this until we are sure of our own faith in what we believe. The church in India, like any other church, cannot give life by living in a vacuum, struggling for breath. Only as we reaffirm our faith, make an uncompromising and courageous search for truth in the realm of religion and apply it to practical life, will the church in India become a "living and a life-giving church."

**THE EVANGELICAL CHURCHES
IN LATIN AMERICA**



THE EVANGELICAL CHURCHES IN LATIN AMERICA

BY GONZALO BÁEZ CAMARGO

CHRISTIANITY made its entrance in Latin America early in the sixteenth century. It came as a part and portion of the Iberian conquest and domination of the New World. Ardent missionaries accompanied and followed the victorious adventurers, who achieved the surrendering of vast territories and millions of natives to the Spanish and Portuguese crowns. Franciscans, Augustinians, Dominicans, later on the Jesuits, and other minor religious orders, as well as innumerable priests, started intensive drives to baptize and catechize the Indians. The early missionary expeditions of the pioneer friars into the most remote regions and among the wildest tribes, their patience and tenderness in educating and civilizing the savages, their staunch protection of the natives against the plundering ambitions and ferocious lust of conquerors and colonists, their solicitous appreciation and development of the aboriginal skills, all this remains as one of the most heroic and golden pages in the history of Christian missions. Recognition of the equally well-established fact that not a few of the friars

and priests, on the other hand, associated themselves with soldiers and Iberian landowners in the cruel mistreatment of the natives, must not mislead us into forgetting the manly courage, apostolic zeal, and loving nature of many of the early missionaries.

ROMAN CATHOLIC AND EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

The Roman Catholic church has been ever since its entrance a tremendous influence in the cultural development of Latin America. During the whole period of the Spanish and Portuguese rule, and it is still true even to the present day in a few of the Latin American countries, the church was practically in full control of education. All the public charities, such as hospitals, homes for the old, etc., were also a direct result of Roman Catholic piety, and they functioned under the auspices and with the support of the church. The same can be said about pioneer agencies for the rescue of homeless street urchins, prostitutes, and various delinquents. As little or as much of education, social relief and other pious works as there ever was during the three long centuries of colonial rule—perhaps with the only exception of the period marked by the liberal and enlightened government of Charles III—must be credited almost exclusively to the Roman Catholic church.

But, in all fairness, there is another side of the picture. As a matter of fact, a vast proportion of the population, particularly the Indians, were practically left on the fringe and without much of the benefit of this otherwise

splendid cultural action of the church. As a result, the utmost poverty, darkest ignorance, crudest superstition, and lowest moral and spiritual and physical degradation prevailed among the masses. As the convents and the church in general grew in wealth and prestige and influence, there was a centralization of interest and resources in the large cities and upper classes. The first fervor in the catechization and education of the Indians and the masses in general soon decayed until it practically faded out. As late as 1810, that is to say near the end of the Iberian domination, a Roman Catholic authority, Bishop Abad y Queipo, of Mexico City, wrote: "This great mass of inhabitants [referring to the Indians and the *castas*, that is, four-fifths of the population] hardly possess property or even a home. They are really in an abject and miserable condition, without good customs or morality."

It is a very much debated point to what extent true Christianity actually pervaded the whole social body, from the bottom upwards. Nominally an overwhelming majority of the Latin American population is Roman Catholic. But it is not a question of mere church membership or nominal affiliation, but of the real depth and breadth of Christian faith and experience. The way in which Roman Catholic Christianity was introduced and made prevalent in Latin America, its age-long association with oppressive officialdom and the elements in the status of state religion and religious monopoly which always carry the germs of spiritual decay, have resulted in a very

superficial Christianization of the people. Outward conformity and formalism become easily, under these circumstances, a substitute for genuine Christianity.

Of the 120,000,000 inhabitants of Latin America, between ten and twenty per cent are Indians. On this point authorities differ, but prominent scholars agree in asserting that the Indians are yet to be converted to Christianity, inasmuch as their "conversion" *en masse* during and immediately after the conquest was very superficial and largely a matter of self-preservation. To enjoy the protection of the good friars and priests, and with the hope of receiving more humane treatment once they became "brethren in the faith of Christ" with their conquerors and oppressors, the Indians flocked by thousands and thousands to be baptized, and adopted at least the outward forms of the new religion. But deep down in their souls, and generation after generation, the Indians still remain pagans. Even a superficial study of religious beliefs and practices of present-day "Catholic" Indians shows the extent and persistence of remnants of ancient fetishism, animistic superstitions, and demonomancy, disguised under Christian names and external ritualism. There is no space in this paper to enter into the various factors and circumstances that are responsible for this fact, but that it is a fact has come to be accepted as a commonplace among all ethnological scholars.

For most of those belonging to the upper and well-to-do classes, Roman Catholic Christianity is primarily

a matter of social tradition and manners. To dispense with the forms of it, would mean serious harm to business, loss of prestige, and social ostracism. It is a sort of elegant conformity with socially approved standards of distinction and noble birth. As to the middle classes, they are midway between the crudity of plebeian superstition and the good-mannered conformism of the aristocracy. Space forbids extensive and abundant quotations, but the judgment of the great South American educator, Dr. Juan B. Terán, would be considered as fairly representative: "In America [meaning especially Latin America] . . . Christian preaching did not penetrate either the spiritual life or the customs. The conversion of America to Christianity is not a fact accomplished during the conquest, but a process that has not yet been completed, especially in the masses of people, if conversion is to be demonstrated by the formation of a moral structure and a subconscious spontaneity, and not by mere adherence to ritual formulas or to an empty mimetism."¹ Some enlightened Roman Catholics themselves realize the seriousness of the spiritual condition of their church. As early as 1866, a Catholic paper in Brazil described Roman Catholicism in that country pathetically thus: ". . . its despised episcopacy, the deplorable state of its clergy, a worship bastardized with pagan practices, beliefs either fanatic or sceptical, and asphyxiated as it is by the paralysis of a crushing indifference. . . . The majesty of Catholic worship has been here reduced to practices not

¹ *La Salud de la América Española*, p. 69.

only idolatrous and heathenish but even of an absurd fetishism.”¹

That in the midst of this condition and under these circumstances Latin American Catholicism has been able to produce, here and there, some high and solitary examples of Christian saintliness, is, on the one hand, a tribute to the inner spiritual potentialities of a church otherwise so deeply corroded by the evils already mentioned. But on the other hand, the very existence of these exceptions only makes more evident, by contrast, the darkness of the general picture.

It was into this picture that Reformed, Protestant, or Evangelical Christianity came at last. As a result of the ruthless suppression of the Reformation in Portugal and Spain, a policy which of course was made extensive to their colonies, the very possibility of a Protestant movement in the Ibero-American world was soon suffocated. The carefully preserved isolation in which the mother countries kept their colonies made it very difficult for the latter to come under the influence of the religious revolution which was shaking Europe in the sixteenth century and onwards. The Protestant Anglo-Saxon colonies of the North were then separated from the Ibero-Americans by enormous stretches of desert, wild and scarcely populated territories, so that an early infiltration from those sources was almost impossible. The danger, therefore, of a Reform outbreak in Latin America

¹ Quoted by Braga and Grubb in *The Republic of Brazil*, World Dominion Press, London.

at that time was practically nil. Through the Inquisition, the Roman Catholic church kept its eyes alert and its hands tight. A few isolated dissenters or mere suspects of "Lutheranism" were occasionally tried, kept in prison, or, in very few instances, handed over for execution.

In spite of all this spiritual seclusion, a small party of Huguenots, under the leadership of Pastors Richier and Chartier, landed in Brazil as early as 1557 and established a branch of the Reformed Church of Geneva. But this first missionary adventure came to an end when five of the party were martyred and the rest expelled by the Portuguese. Later on some foreign communities of Reformed faith, living under the colonial rule, such as the Dutch, the British, and the German, attempted to organize themselves as churches in Brazil and other areas, but freedom of worship was consistently refused them. Almost two centuries after the Huguenot attempt, the Moravian Brethren opened mission work in the islands commonly referred to as the West Indies (1734), and a year later they undertook a very successful missionary task in Dutch Guiana, reaching the Indians and the Bush Negroes. But these missions were not established in Ibero-American territory proper, and due to this and to geographical conditions, their influence did not at that time reach beyond.

It was not until the dawn of the nineteenth century—and especially after most of the colonies had gained independence—that, usually under special treaties, foreigners of non-Catholic affiliation were allowed the practice of

their faith. British residents in Rio de Janeiro organized thus the first Protestant church in Latin America. By this time the recently organized Bible societies began to foster the private circulation of the Scriptures. For some twenty-five years, starting in 1818, when he landed in Buenos Aires, James Thomson, of the British and Foreign Bible Society and the English Foreign School Society, traveled widely throughout Mexico and South America, introducing the new Lancasterian school system, highly regarded by many of the outstanding leaders of the independent countries, and at the same time engaging in active distribution of the Scriptures. At various times—and not without bitter opposition from the Roman Catholic church and the conservatives—the governments of the Latin American countries introduced constitutional reforms granting various degrees of religious freedom.

Organized missionary work began then with vigorous impulse. The pioneer in this field was the Reverend F. E. Pitts, of the Methodist Episcopal Church of the U. S. A., who landed in Rio, August 18, 1835. He was soon followed by R. Justin Spaulding and Daniel P. Kidder, who continued his work. In the meantime, John Dempster had landed in Buenos Aires, Argentina, May 25, 1836. Allen Gardiner organized the South American Missionary Society in 1844, and six years later, together with six companions, starved to death in Tierra del Fuego. David Trumbull entered Chile in 1845. Protestant emigrants from Germany, Switzerland, Great Britain, Northern Italy, France, and other countries, entering Latin

America in continuous stream over several decades, assisted in the process of planting and extending evangelical Christianity. The Moravians established mission work in 1849, in Nicaragua. The great missionary leader, Dr. R. R. Kalley, a Scottish physician, came to Rio in 1855. H. B. Pratt entered Colombia in 1856. The "Constitutionalist Fathers," a group of Catholic priests who left their church because of their strong sympathies for the new liberal constitution of the country, started in 1859 a reform movement in Mexico which a few years later began negotiations with the Episcopal Church of the U. S. A. and finally developed into a Mexican Episcopal church. About the same time, two North American missionaries, Miss Melinda Rankin and James Hickey, and a British layman, Thomas M. Westrup, began the evangelization of northern Mexico.

The second half of the nineteenth century witnessed a wide spread of evangelical Christianity in all the Latin American countries, some of which have been more receptive than others. Most of the major—and not a few of the minor—denominations in the United States, Great Britain, and other European countries are represented. A few indigenous churches have sprung up; for example, the Fluminense Church in Brazil and the Evangelical Church of Peru. Besides these, there are a good many "independent" and "faith" groups.

The numerical growth of the Protestant churches in Latin America has been worth noticing, especially during the last two or three decades. The movement is stronger

in Brazil than anywhere else. In Mexico the Protestant population has almost trebled in the last thirty years. Dr. Kenneth S. Latourette, the well-known authority on missions, writes in his analysis of the church on the field, in the *Interpretative Statistical Survey of the World Mission of the Christian Church*¹ that “. . . in Latin America the growth has been phenomenal. There the number of communicants appears to have multiplied more than sevenfold in the present century and to have trebled in the past thirteen years.” And in the matter of the number of church workers—undoubtedly a sure sign of strength—Dr. Latourette calls attention to the fact that “only in Latin America, Madagascar, and Negro Africa have the past thirteen years shown an increase, and only in Latin America has it been considerable.”²

In spite of this tremendous proportional growth the evangelical Christians are still a very small minority in Latin America. According to a very recent statistical summary there are in the whole of Latin America almost 1,725,000 evangelical Christians out of a total population of 120,000,000, or 1 to every 69, this proportion varying in the particular countries from 1 to every 1,733 (Ecuador) to 1 to every 24 (Puerto Rico).

But the influence of the evangelical body is entirely out of proportion to its numerical strength. Literacy among Protestants is far above the average in any country. There are no statistics available on this particular

¹ International Missionary Council, New York, 1938.

² *Op. cit.*, pp. 240, 241.

point, and rough estimates are risky and apt to be misleading, but it may be generally accepted that 90 per cent literate is not far from being the true proportion. Benito Juarez, the great Mexican President, characterized Protestantism as "a religion which will compel the Indians to read." The evangelical schools and colleges have been ranking first in educational progress and influence. Especially noticeable as a distinct contribution of evangelicalism to Latin American uplift is the anti-alcoholic work and education now officially adopted by some governments. Physical culture was first known to this part of the world through the Y.M.C.A., the Y.W.C.A., and the mission schools. And in many regions the medical missionary has been the pioneer in introducing sanitation, health education, and scientific treatment of diseases, in spite of the fact that in most countries the state universities have fairly good medical schools and the governments have been actively engaged in promoting public health.

It is always unsafe to generalize, but the statement that on the whole the standards of morality are higher among the evangelicals than among the average non-Christians cannot be easily disproved. The unending war against alcohol, and even against such "minor" vices as smoking, and the definite stress on social purity and the sacredness of marriage have been considered as characteristic marks of Protestant groups and individuals. In Mexico, for instance, for a long time before the Government adopted anti-alcoholism as a foremost point in its program of pop-

ular uplift, it was customary to ask of anybody who started campaigning against liquor, "Is he [or she] a Protestant?"

The spiritual influence has been, of course, the most distinctive. The acceptance of evangelical Christianity has meant for the new convert liberation from the bondage of superstition, idolatry, and fear of the demons. This has been the more striking in the case of the Indians. But above all, evangelical Christianity has meant acquaintance with the Bible as the word of God. The Bible remains a closed and forbidden book to the majority of Latin Americans. The distribution of Scriptures has been, therefore, the fundamental method of evangelism. As a defensive measure, the Roman Catholic church has begun to release the Scriptures also, although carefully annotated according to its official interpretation. But even in this indirect way, it is by the work of Protestantism that Latin America is getting acquainted with the Sacred Book of Christianity in an unprecedented way. The result is bound to be an uplifting of the spiritual tone in the Roman Catholic church itself.

CHIEF PROBLEMS OF THE CHURCH AND THE INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIAN

There are three main facts about the evangelical churches in Latin America out of which three groups of corresponding problems arise.

The Latin American churches constitute a minority. From the preceding historical summary we have seen that

the evangelical Christians in Latin America are a numerical minority. And not only that; they are also relatively young as a group, so that they have not been able to develop in full measure their potential resources. In addition to this, they are living and working in a very difficult and unsympathetic environment. They are confronted not only by the elegant indifference of the Roman Catholic higher classes, but also by active opposition from the traditional church, and in some instances from the regional or national governments, either at the instigation of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, wherever the latter are influential enough, or under the inspiration of anti-religious trends.

This difficult position against a hostile environment is made much more difficult by the unfortunate fact that the evangelical minority is broken up into scores of denominations, not always able to see the evangelization of a country as a common and cooperative task, and oftentimes, what is worse, engaged in competitive and quarrelsome activities. It is a common story in Latin America—that of a flourishing congregation of new converts belonging to one denomination being torn to pieces by the insidious controversial attacks and house-to-house visitation by agents of other denominations eager to reap where others have sown; with the result that the members, puzzled by the tragic fact of denominational discord, disband, many of them giving up their former affiliation and falling into a cold or scornful skepticism.

This piecemeal, scattered, and even discordant approach to a common task constitutes a greater weakness than mere numerical inferiority. A strongly united minority is always more effective than any uncoordinated majority. For instance, in Argentina, where the evangelical community is only of 200,000 (as over against a total population of 12,000,000) there are some forty denominations or missions and only a handful of them are willing to cooperate.

Thus, perhaps the foremost need of Latin American evangelization, so far as the strategy of the movement is concerned, is *cooperation*. The cooperative spirit has been making great progress in countries like Brazil, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and to some extent in the Rio de la Plata Republics. But even in these places it is not complete or satisfactory. The average attitude of denominational leaders throughout Latin America is of frank non-cooperation. Whole bodies have made of it a sort of explicit or implicit "orthodoxy." As a matter of fact, the denominational divisions are not in any way indigenous to Latin America. They were introduced by eager and sincere if not always wise and far-sighted missionaries. With the exception of a few indigenous churches, the vast majority of the churches belong to North American and European affiliations or classifications. Even the North-South distinction due to the Civil War in the United States was introduced in Latin America. This unfortunate duplication of foreign divisions, oftentimes with all of the original bitterness in them, have been

strongly rooted in Latin America; so much so that in many instances the national leaders have become far more intolerant and non-cooperative than present-day missionaries. When it was pointed out to one of these leaders that his denomination was in fact at the head of cooperative movements practically all over the world, he calmly retorted, "It makes no difference with me; they are wrong and they will be sorry for it."

The problem of cooperation is closely connected with the problem of *a more strategic and coordinated occupation of the field*. Even essential commodities for a medium-educated person are not easily to be found outside the main cities and large towns. This circumstance, added to the lack of good communications, results in a fatal tendency to concentrate the evangelical work in the best populated and most easily accessible centers, with the corresponding lessening of stress upon rural evangelism. It is customary to find in these centers several congregations belonging to different and many times quarreling denominations, while vast areas of the country are left without witness. Growing concentration in urban centers was one of the main liabilities of Roman Catholic missionary work, and the evangelical churches are dangerously leaning in the same direction. In order to avoid unnecessary overlapping and unchristian competition, some sort of cooperation is imperative which will result in well-planned and systematic occupation of the field and in a more effective use of the personal and financial resources of the churches.

Kagawa, who is campaigning in Japan for a Christian community of a million at least, is right in stressing the importance of numerical growth in order to make a deeper impact on the environment. Certainly, numbers are not necessarily the first or the most important requirement in the evangelization of a country or group of countries, but it is none the less true that a certain numerical strength is highly desirable for a wider and more effective advance of the evangelical work. There is, therefore, the problem of *speeding up the growth in membership* of the Latin American churches. Notwithstanding the fact that this growth has been very great in the past years, the total number of the Protestant constituency in Latin America is still far below the necessary strength to become more influential. It is encouraging to find one evangelical Christian to every twenty-four inhabitants in Puerto Rico, the highest mark reached by any of the Latin American countries. But this proportion means only four per cent, which is after all very low. What shall we say of Ecuador, where the proportion runs down to five-hundredths of one per cent? Or of Bolivia, where it is almost one-hundredth of one per cent? Or of Colombia where it painfully reaches only two-hundredths of one per cent? It becomes, then, imperative to build up the Latin American churches, not because numbers are ends in themselves but because numbers are very important under conditions where the opposing majority is so overwhelming.

Another problem arising from the minority condition

of evangelical Christianity in Latin America, and one which affects not only the corporate life of the churches but specifically the life of the individual Christian, is the tremendous pull back of community life and social pressure. The new convert was reached by the evangelistic approach not as an isolated individual but as the member of a community deeply rooted in tradition and ruled by powerful social conventions. The prevailing conceptions and mores in this community are corroded by non-Christian elements, and they are oftentimes definitely anti-Christian. And yet the individual to whom the gospel appeal comes, has been reared in an environment saturated by them. This is especially true of the Indian, for whom the sense of obligation to the community is so strong. But it is also true to a large extent even of the mestizo (mixed) or the white individual, in spite of his more developed individualism.

To this individual, so deeply embedded in the community life, the evangelistic appeal comes as a clarion call to lead a new type of life, one that in many points is diametrically opposed to the standards accepted as supreme rule and law by the community to which he belongs. If this gospel appeal is taken seriously, a very agonizing conflict ensues. The new convert is faced by a cruel dilemma: either he takes heed to the divine call, and in this case he becomes practically a social outcast, or he compromises, and falls back, and is finally reabsorbed by the overwhelming power of the environment. So this problem, both for the church as a body and for the indi-

vidual Christian, of *resisting the tremendous reabsorbing pressure of the environment* becomes a very acute one.

Surely, the gospel appeal is not to be toned down. It is well, after all, that accepting it means a decision to follow a higher way of life whatever the cost may be. And the hard social penalty imposed upon such a decision makes for a better and purer type of Christian life and character. But it is necessary to make a fresh study of the evangelistic approach in order to discover methods that, without lessening the strength of the personal appeal of the gospel, will bring this appeal also to the family as a family and even to a whole community. A collective answer to the appeal of the gospel will not be, indeed, a substitute for personal decision, but it will certainly encourage the latter and will provide the individual convert with better environmental conditions in which to develop a Christian way of life. Numerical growth in the evangelical constituency will help to relieve somewhat this pressure by permeating the environment with Christian concepts and attitudes.

The young Latin American churches are coming of age. This is our second fact. A second set of problems springs out from it. Foremost among them comes the problem of *training national church leaders*. After the first stage—that of the planting of churches by the early missionaries—a strong and natural life calls for a progressive “indigenization” of the work. In taking root, the churches must become attached to the soil, must develop spontaneous and congenial ways of expression, and must

come increasingly under national leadership. This requires well-trained workers, and therefore the setting up of adequate agencies for that purpose becomes central in any program for church development and extension.

The situation of theological seminaries and training schools for workers in Latin America is far from satisfactory. Indeed, it constitutes one of the weakest points in the work. In most countries the seminaries are languishing for lack of candidates to the ministry and also because of an utterly inadequate provision of funds for their support. Furthermore, in most cases the curricula have been built closely following those in operation where and when the missionaries were trained. Nowhere has mere imitation of foreign institutions been more harmful and disastrous. Instead of studying the needs of the country where they are established, the actual problems of the churches, and the nature of the environment and work to be done, and then proceeding to build up a curriculum which will meet the needs, the program has been concocted according to abstract and exotic standards.

This problem refers not only to the training of ordained ministers but also to a large extent to the training of lay workers and of a greater number of volunteers for part-time service. The mobilization of laymen and laywomen, especially the young, becomes an urgent need, and the churches have before them the great problem of stirring up the congregations for more volunteers and of providing these young people with the

necessary training. As a matter of fact, the statistics for 1938, gathered under the International Missionary Council, show a significant increase in the number of Bible training schools.

Whatever is to be said about the way of solving this problem, one thing is certain, and it seems to represent an almost unanimous conviction: national leaders must be trained right in the field and not abroad. Ministers trained in countries foreign to Latin America either lose their grasp and understanding of the situation where they are expected to work or cool down in their interest to return to their country of origin to serve there. Not a few of the candidates sent abroad for theological training have, upon their return, entered commercial or other activities instead. The mastery of the English language, so highly prized in business, has proved to be too strong a temptation for them.

One cannot deal with the problem of national leadership without impinging upon the problem of the *relationship between church indigenoussness* (or "nationalism") and the *ecumenical spirit*. Subordinate to this problem is the particular one of the relationship between national workers and foreign missionaries. As national leadership develops, the transference of responsibilities from the missionaries over to the nationals has not been always happy and smooth. Blame for this lies probably on both sides. The churches in Latin America must give themselves earnestly to a careful and good-spirited study of what is involved in the status of an indigenous or na-

tional church and what is to be its proper and Christian relationship with the mother churches and the Church Universal.

Here looms the dark menace of a bigoted type of nationalism and self-sufficiency as a reaction against the former sense of dependence, helplessness without mission assistance, and lack of responsibility. In some instances the assuming of major responsibility has taken on the character of a veritable revolt against mission boards and missionaries, in which appeal has been made to a bitter and false "nationalistic" feeling. And even if this has not been the case, the future relationship of a national church and the churches in other lands—particularly in the formerly so-called "sending" countries—has not been clearly foreseen and consciously defined.

This consideration naturally leads to our next problem—the *financial support of the churches and their work*. For churches of small membership, as most of the Latin American churches are, the problem of self-support has to be in any case a hard one. Besides small numbers, it is necessary to bear in mind the fact that the constituency of the churches is made up largely of land laborers and lower middle-class people, who live on low wages and who usually have to support large families. Upon this basis the financial outlook of the churches was never very promising. Missionary funds came to the rescue, assisting in the support of the ministers and other workers, taking care of practically all the institutional work, such as schools, colleges, medical establishments, etc. As

the churches grew in numerical strength and developed their sense of responsibility, their financial contributions steadily increased.

But recently the problem has entered an acute phase, due to the drastic reductions in the appropriations from the mission boards. These reductions went down at a rate that the continuous increase in national contributions has not been able to match. The result is obvious. While many individual churches in the urban centers, having already achieved their self-support—that is to say, their *local* support—were not affected by the reductions, the case in the rural fields was quite different. Country churches are made up of poor people, in overwhelming majority. It is very hard for them to undertake to support their pastor unless they receive substantial outside help. Missionary reductions meant cut after cut in the pastor's salary, until the economic strain drove some country pastors out of the ministry or forced them to look for additional income in secular occupations. In both cases the work of evangelization has suffered badly.

It is an encouraging sign of the vitality of the Latin American churches and of their fine spirit of sacrifice to notice that in spite of everything, their contributions have continued to increase. Some countries in South America raised more than they received from abroad, according to the statistics for 1938. These were Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Peru, and Uruguay. And yet this means that if the support of the local work of the churches is to be achieved in the near future, granting

that such may be the case, the institutional work and the extension activities, literature, leadership training, and other equally vital aspects of the evangelical program must continue to receive not decreasing but increasing grants-in-aid from outside sources. It is not possible to expect that young and minority churches, even if they give sacrificially, will be able to take care of absolutely all the expenses involved in the active program of a truly advancing church. It is a heroic and yet a sad picture this, of the younger churches of Latin America and throughout the world, with small numbers and economically poor members, having to face an adverse and overwhelming majority with utterly inadequate resources. It is a challenge to the older churches abroad, calling for a revival in the missionary spirit and in missionary giving, in order to be able to provide the younger churches in the front trenches with adequate funds for the sustaining of their unequal fight.

The young and maturing churches in Latin America are in the midst of social unrest and change. Of course, in a certain sense this is not an exclusive predicament in which the Latin American churches find themselves. Social unrest and change are universal. As the Madras conference puts it, "We live in a world shaken to its foundations." But there are few countries where this unrest and change are more swift, acute, and dangerous than in Latin America. Most of these countries have come down right into the modern age without having passed the feudal stage. Certainly whole areas have

not even outgrown the primitive age. Then, almost suddenly, they are brought face to face with the industrial civilization of modern times. There has been no gradual development or evolution into it. Therefore there is a real shock to be counterbalanced, a thoroughgoing perturbation. Furthermore, these countries lack those deep-seated ethical and religious forces that in other countries have helped to keep the balance, helped to discover sound routes and make constructive and not destructive changes take place.

This situation places a very heavy and disproportionate responsibility on the evangelical minority. Because the traditional church, the Roman Catholic, has been so closely associated with the ancient regime and has developed some temporal interests, it has consistently sided, throughout Latin American history, with the forces that champion the continuation of the established order. As seen through the attitude and deeds of this church, Christianity appears to be a reactionary and paralyzing force, a true opiate rather than the revolutionary witness to a Christ who is love and justice, who has "come to make all things new," and whose judgment of the established order demands repentance and a new desire for the guidance of his spirit. The evangelical minority is thus confronted with the challenge to bring a fresh and vital interpretation of Christ, who, as the Madras conference states it, "is revolutionary."

Social change, we all know, is going on convulsively and at great speed in some Latin American countries—

Mexico is perhaps the most typical instance of this. This places upon the evangelical minority a tremendous responsibility to provide guidance and to bring to bear such a spiritual influence upon this process that they may cope successfully with the non-Christian and the even frankly anti-Christian influences that are striving to gain control. As a matter of fact, the social revolution is being carried on in Latin America largely under anti-Christian inspiration and direction. This leadership is either Marxian or it has dangerous leanings towards fascism or nazism. The evangelical community, then, is called by Providence to inject Christian inspiration into the turmoil and to provide public leaders who will be really honest, unselfish, and full of genuine love for the suffering masses.

Latin America is a classic example of a region inured to revolution. There have been plenty of political revolutions, there have been mere changes of governments or public institutions. At the present time these countries are being shaken by the birth-pangs of a tremendous social and economic revolution. But all these secular movements will fail and will end in chaos and violence unless a sweeping, life-transforming, heart-changing spiritual revolution takes place. This is the challenge, the duty, and the task of the evangelical minority. What a gigantic responsibility for a minority!

So the problem of what is to be the social attitude and work of the evangelical churches in Latin America is with them not a question of scholarly theological dis-

putation but a matter of life or death. If they are going to flee into a purely other-worldly attitude and stand aloof from the everyday problems and sufferings of the masses, their influence runs the risk of being completely obliterated. On the other hand, if in trying to avoid such "spiritual" escapism and be realistic they dump themselves into the opposite pitfall of becoming purely humanitarian and philanthropic, active only in social service institutions, or if they lose their essential and distinctive message of full salvation in Christ and the need of repentance, conversion and regeneration, then they will be as the salt that has "lost its savour" and will be also thrown away to be trodden by the passersby. And the passersby will be, in this case, twenty countries, with 120,000,000 disappointed and confused people.

THE FUTURE OF EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY IN LATIN AMERICA

In spite of their small numbers, meager resources, mistakes, and failures, the evangelical churches of Latin America have shown an extraordinary vitality. In most of the countries they have been subjected to severe trials, and from these they have come out again and again with renewed strength. This is indeed promising of a bright future. But if this future is to be made real, it is imperative to find the right solution to the various problems of which those mentioned herein are only types, or samples. In order to make this possible, the cooperation, fellowship, and unfailing help of the older

churches becomes exceedingly important and, humanly speaking, indispensable.

The churches will undoubtedly continue to grow. If the present crisis in the matter of candidates for the ministry and the problem of providing an adequate training for them are solved, a brilliant and efficient body of national workers will carry the churches through a period of great progress and spiritual growth. Notwithstanding the dark prospects of the economic situation, everything looks as though the national contributions for the support of the work will also continue to increase. The number of evangelical Christians will surely be raised.

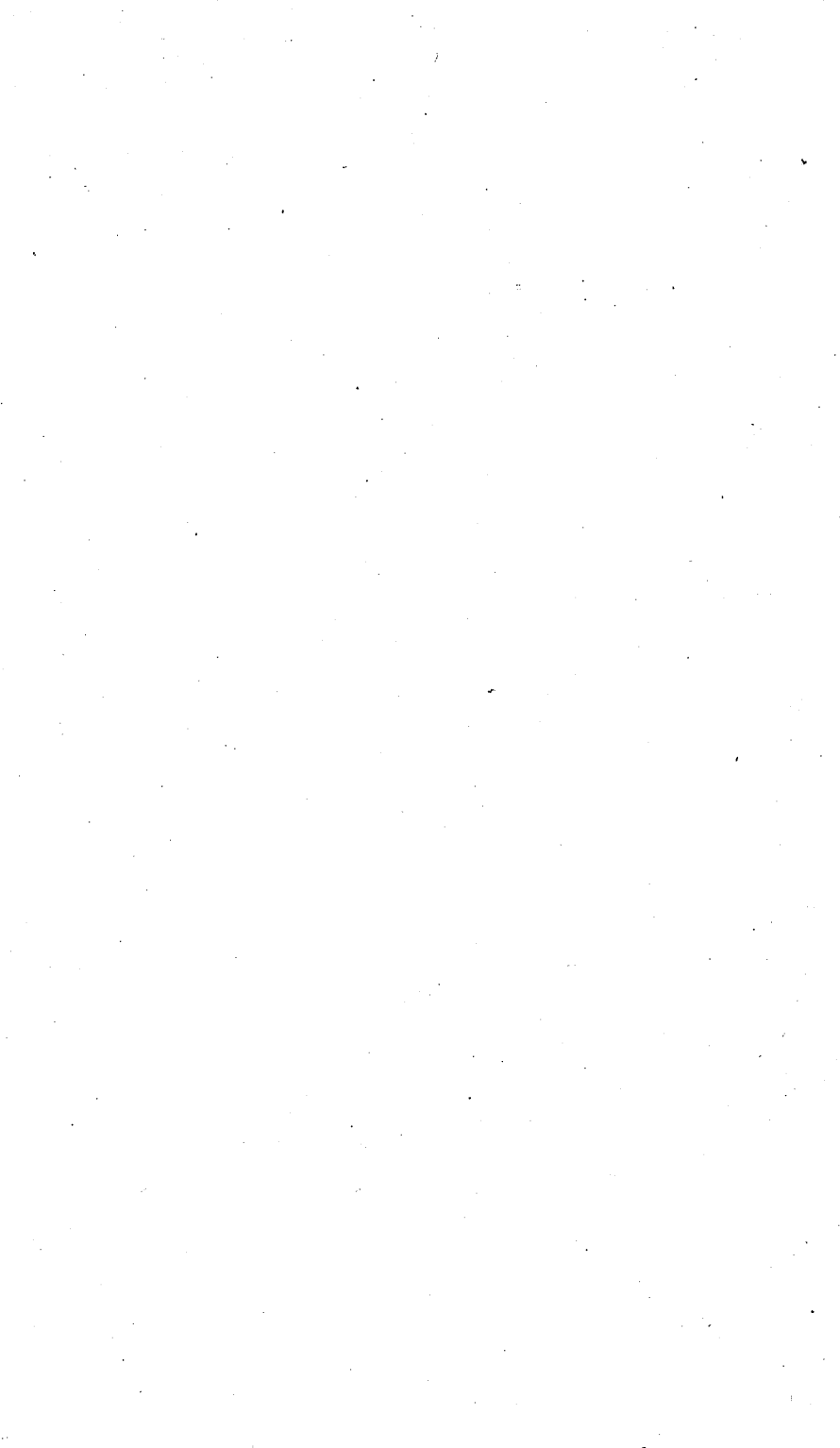
But it is doubtful whether evangelical Christians will ever constitute the numerical majority; that is, whether the majority of Latin Americans will accept and profess evangelical Christianity. A Protestant Latin America, in the same sense in which one speaks of a Protestant Great Britain or a Protestant Sweden, seems to be only a dream. Looking out into a relatively near future—fifty, eighty, or a hundred years from now—it is possible to see a considerably larger number of evangelical Christians. It will be a considerable and larger minority, but still a minority. But it is bound to be a significant minority, one able to make a deep impact upon the whole life of these countries. Its role will be that of the leaven, of the active ferment working against spiritual decay and for a perpetual renewal of spiritual life. As a minority—but as a very influential minority—it will help

to bring about significant changes in social outlook and even in the current mores of the people. Then, in the far future, after perhaps one or two centuries of sustained and faithful witness, it is possible to envisage as a radiant reality a great Latin American Reformation, an outpouring of spiritual life bursting forth from the old wine-skins and resulting in a vigorous missionary movement which will carry to other countries a youthful and fresh stream of spirituality.

Is this merely a dream, or a real possibility? After all, it is not the vision of a futuristic dream turned true that constitutes the motive and the driving impulse of Christian witness, but rather a burning love for Christ, our Redeemer, and out of deep gratitude to him the willingness to obey his command to preach the gospel and to be his witnesses in all lands.

The evangelical churches are witnessing for Christ in Latin America. They have a sacred commission to fulfil here. May they be loyal to him and to his calling. This, and no other thing, is what constitutes the success of Christian witnessing everywhere.

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN NIGERIA



THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN NIGERIA

BY SAMPSON U. ETUK

NIGERIA is a country with a population of more than twenty million people. Together with the Gold Coast, Sierra Leone, and Gambia, it forms a part of British West Africa. The River Niger, from which the country derives its name, flows through a large portion of the country and forms a natural gateway into the interior. The earlier missionary pioneers made much use of this river.

Islam, ancestor worship, and so-called fetish worship were in time past the main religions of the people. There are over eight million Muslims in the country at present, most of whom live in the North. Christian missions have made very little headway in converting these Moslems to Christianity, but they have made rapid progress in the non-Muslim community.

Before the advent of the missionaries, the people lived in well-organized clans and tribes. The moral code was rather strict, and conformed with the demands of tribal life. Priest and witch doctor wielded powerful influence over the people, and they encouraged superstition.

Because of the vastness of the country, it should be noted that this article will be largely concerned with that portion of the church that is located in southeastern Nigeria, where there are numerous denominational missions, the undenominational Qua Iboe Mission, and also the Roman Catholic Mission.

The Roman Catholic Mission has many followers. Recently, special efforts have been made to increase the number of its members. This mission does not, of course, cooperate with the other missionary bodies, and it recognizes no boundaries. This is consistent with its teaching, inasmuch as the other missions are all Protestant. The Roman Catholic Mission includes both medical and educational work.

The Protestant denominations in this section of Nigeria are the Church of England (Church Missionary Society), the English Methodists, the Scottish Presbyterians, and the Southern Baptists and Lutherans from America. The first Protestant missionaries came into Nigeria over a hundred years ago, but for many years their activities were confined to the western part of the country. The Scottish Mission—then known as the United Free Church of Scotland—started work in Calabar over ninety years ago. Some native chiefs probably heard of missionary activity in the West, and they requested, through European traders, that mission work be begun in their towns. In answer to this request, Scottish missionaries came to Calabar. They settled down to learn the language of the people, and soon began trans-

lating the Bible. The early days were very trying—the effect of the climate on the pioneers, the strangeness of the country, and other difficulties weighed heavily against them. But they were undaunted by these obstacles. They bent to their task. Although death took heavy toll of their number, they continued to preach the gospel and to teach their adherents the Christian way of living. Some of the missionaries went up the Cross River and opened other stations. After a few years a solid church had become established, for many men and women were converted to the new faith. Mission stations sprang up in outlying districts.

As a result of the Scottish Mission's work, there are today in West Africa numerous schools and churches, with thousands of members. The churches in connection with this mission are self-supporting, and until lately the mission had an institution for the training of its ministers. Educational work is far reaching, ranging from village schools to large institutions with several departments. The Duke Town School, managed by this mission, with an enrollment of over 1,400 children, is the largest school in West Africa. The mission also maintains hospitals and a leper colony. This colony is made up of more than a thousand lepers, and it is very efficiently managed.

After the Scottish mission had worked for over forty years and the news of its good work had spread, a few chiefs at Ibuno, on the mouth of the Qua Iboe River, gathered one day and sent a letter through one of the

missionaries at Calabar to England, asking for a missionary. This letter was read in Hartley College, London, to a class of young students.

In this class there was a young man from Belfast who was completing his training. When the principal had finished reading the letter to the students, he asked whether there was one among them who would volunteer to go as a missionary to the people who had sent the letter. This student from Belfast, Mr. S. A. Bill, then a young man of about twenty-one, stood up and said that he would go after the completion of his course. After his graduation he approached a few of his friends for financial help to embark upon his adventure. He was able to get enough money to pay his passage, buy a few things for his journey, and have enough left over to maintain himself for a few months.

Mr. Bill soon discovered how difficult was the work before him. When he left England his intention had been to maintain himself by working while he carried on his preaching of the gospel. This of course he found impossible, for he could get no employment by which to earn his living at Ibuno. Some of his friends in England sent him food and supplies at regular intervals, but he had no real support, and he must have had a very difficult time in those days.

He preached and taught for more than two years before returning home. He brought with him to England a young man who eventually returned to Nigeria as the first native pastor. Through the work and influence of

this convert preacher, many of his countrymen became Christians. Another among the first converts was a woman. She had great influence, apparently, and used it in leading many persons to Christ. She lived to a good old age and saw the steady spread of the gospel in her area.

Some of the Nigerian communities were very backward at the time the early missionaries arrived. Living conditions were unsanitary to a degree. Diseases caused by dirt and uncleanness were attributed to witchcraft. The people lived in great fear, and they were at the mercy of the juju priests, who were supposed to be religious leaders. Idol worship was general among them.

When the missionaries came, they did not simply preach the gospel and do nothing else. They opened dispensaries and administered cure to the body as well as to the soul. They set up industries, principally carpentering, with a view to improving the homes of their friends. They also pioneered in printing, in order to provide books in the native language for the schools which they were establishing.

In some cases the work of individuals among the missionaries stimulated the formation of mission boards, while in other cases boards took the initiative in sending out other pioneers to serve in the field. With the additional strength resulting from organization, the work prospered. Mission stations became "sending churches," training native workers and sending them out into near-by communities. In one case there was an outreach

toward people over two hundred miles away. Native missionaries would go to these new districts, and settle down among the strange people who spoke a different language and had different customs from their own. They would open schools and churches, and for support depend upon their home churches.

This expansion met resistance from some of the chiefs, for the reason that the Christian teaching offered was opposed to many of the tribal laws and customs. For a long time new converts suffered terrible privations, and some of them even met death or lost their possessions. Many young men and women who went to church were driven away from home by their parents, with the threat of complete loss of their inheritance unless the new faith was renounced. In some towns opposition to the opening of churches was so strong that new converts had to guard their churches during Sunday and weekday services. But on the whole the people treated the missionaries with kindness, in response to the medical assistance offered, even though they opposed the teaching. Their own religion, they said, was as good as the new one brought by the missionaries. And yet some of the chiefs became real friends to the missionaries, and eventually they became Christians themselves. In many towns, in fact, growth of mission work was due to the chiefs' influence and help.

In some instances, this very expansion has, itself, been the cause of competitive problems akin to those raised by the presence of more than one denomination in the

same area. There even developed much rivalry between the missionary bodies. This was very unfortunate, for it produced an unwholesome influence upon members of the different denominations. A few years ago the leaders of these bodies met and agreed to define their boundaries and spheres of influence. They even went further, they worked toward federation, a step which was greatly welcomed by the government. This was a most beneficial arrangement, for the young African convert had always been puzzled about the many denominations of the Christian church, each asserting that it was the best.

As the work of the missions expanded, the need for trained men and women became more and more keenly felt. Opposition continued in some of the districts newly opened; nevertheless, the Protestant church grew in strength. Since it cost the early Christians so much to uphold their faith, they generally remained true to their convictions and united together for the common good.

Missionaries soon learned the value of the principle of self-supporting churches, and this practice has been maintained with varying degrees of success. According to this system, each church is responsible for the salary of its preacher, who is also the day-school teacher for the town in which he works.

From the very beginning a school has been regarded by the missionaries as the necessary adjunct of the village. This dual function of a preacher, who was gener-

ally ill-trained for his teaching job, called for much criticism a few years ago from the State Education Department. The criticism was resented by the missionaries, for they had voluntarily taken up educational work because the state was doing very little for children of rural communities. Nowadays the government usually makes annual grants to the missionaries for certain selected schools. However, these grants are absolutely insufficient for the educational budgets. The result of this is that only a few children gain access to a good school equipped with trained teachers. The bulk of the several hundreds of mission schools is still staffed by untrained teachers who are primarily preachers.

The Sunday school is an important part of mission work. Many thousands of children are enrolled every year. There are also week-day classes for inquirers who are preparing for baptism, and for communicants, too. In every church there is a weekly prayer meeting, when the members meet for worship and prayer. In recent years women workers have been engaged to carry on the work among women and girls. Homes have been opened both for the short training of girls of marriageable age, and for girls' schools that receive government grants.

Most missions have a large medical department, with a hospital, a leper colony, and a dispensary in each central station. Ministering through the hospital and dispensary has been a very important part of the work of each mission, and this has been the means of bringing

many people into the church. Child welfare work has also been in progress, often conducted by wives of missionaries and other women workers.

Although numbers are not always very useful in religious evaluation, there are significant statistical data to show that the Christian church in Nigeria is really making headway. The number of people joining the churches each year is convincing proof of the effectiveness of the gospel.

The expansion of Christianity in Nigeria during the modern period has been quite rapid. For example, the Christian gospel was first preached at a town at the mouth of the river Qua Iboe in 1887, and scarcely more than fifty years later it had spread to the source of the river, more than two hundred miles away. At the present time the work has been extended into a new area altogether, among people who speak strange languages and who have different modes of living. Yet when these people meet with their older Christian friends in a conference or in a service of worship, they find that they have many things in common. They find they have a common leader and that he is to the old follower as he is to the new. There must be something truly great in the gospel of Jesus Christ—"the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love." Color and credal prejudices, and all other things which disunite men, break down when this gospel is accepted and practised.

This article is a mere outline of the development of the church, principally in southeastern Nigeria, with

some description of its existing status. With this development, however, many very fine and interesting African customs have disappeared. It has sometimes been the practice of missions to demand that the African eliminate from his life much that he holds dear before he can accept Christianity. He has been told to abandon his drama, his songs, his art, and the other things which make up his culture.

The African is naturally very religious. His work, leisure, recreation—all of life—are bound up with his religion. In the past he would not stage an important play or exhibit an artistic show without sacrificing to the god from whom he acquired power to do these things. During the planting season he performed the customary ceremonies to the god of the fields, from whom he expected a good crop; in the harvest time he was careful to show his thankfulness. For his ceremonies he made religious songs about his gods, the fields, and the warriors. He carved religious images and painted scenes on his shrines.

The ordinary missionary from a Western environment and culture has had the notion that the African must be purged of all his ways and forced to adopt those of the missionary before he could be truly Christian. The missionary has often forgotten that a critical examination of his own customs and culture will show traces of their pagan origin; that what may be suitable in Europe or America may be absolutely unsuitable and even dangerous in Africa or in the Eastern countries; that it is

not imperative that people of one country adopt wholesale foreign ways and customs before becoming Christians.

Missions have often found the system of self-supporting churches a very successful one. The sound basis underlying this practice is that community self-help has been a customary characteristic of every village. Long before the advent of the missionaries, each village or clan was taught to subscribe to anything which was intended to benefit the village. If a village was in need, it could appeal to another village for help, which was readily given. Therefore, when missionaries ask church members to support their teacher, that kind of request is not new to them. Even non-members have often helped in the support of missionaries, if for no reason other than that constituted by a traditional sense of the duty of each villager. The foregoing is an example of some of the customs, a preliminary study of which would reveal many good practices that ought to be retained in the church today.

This problem of distinguishing between what is good and what is harmful in African cultures is one of the most difficult tasks before the churches. It is true that missionaries are now realizing that great mistakes were made in the past and some of them are taking practical steps to appreciate and utilize elements of African cultures. But it will take a long time before the damage done is amended, if that is ever possible. African art must be restored to its rightful place, and the church

should not interfere with its development. The same attitude should be taken with regard to music. This is not the age in which to regard, without very careful examination, things as evil just because they are different.

The church in eastern Nigeria needs trained African workers. It has been the practice to engage as a preacher a young man who could read the Bible in the native language and who had received a meager degree of scriptural training. This might have been inevitable in the pioneering days of the missionary enterprise, but there is no justification for it now. Congregations are made up of people who are becoming more and more educated, and it is up to the missions to provide efficient training for the pastors of these congregations. For many years after the missions had been established, education was confined largely to men, and many unhappy marriages have resulted. The training of women and girls has been going on for years but the proportion of women in educational institutions is still very low. If we want Christian homes where husband and wife are to live happily together as partners, we must educate both and not only the man. I realize that the question of education is in part a matter for the state, but Christian communities have always been responsible for providing education for their children.

Very often the church tends to make too many rules. This is a real weakness and constitutes one of the church's problems. A person joining a church is not

unlike a child entering a school. Most of what he learns comes through a process of growth, from contact with his teacher and with his fellow-learners. Some of the disciplinary actions of many of the young churches do more harm than good. It is not external restraint but inward growth which builds a strong church in any land.

Nowadays many churches have been greatly disturbed by certain religious publications from foreign countries. These publications have represented various passages of Scripture as though they possessed magical powers upon those who recite them at certain hours of the day. Of course this kind of teaching is alluring to an uncritical mind, for thousands of people who flock into the church go there for what they can get out of it. Some go because they desire to be numbered with the Christians, others because they wish to be free from the power of witch doctors—whose prestige, incidentally, is rapidly declining. The problem is, how can the church minister to such a vast multitude with such motley desires?

The poverty of the Nigerian church is a severe problem. As has already been said, most of the mission schools are inefficient. This is partly due to insufficient funds to develop them. About 85 per cent of all schools are supported by their members. The growth and decline of most of the schools depend upon the prices the farmers receive in return for their produce, since Nigeria is mainly an agricultural country.

Individual Christians have their own problems. Some

come from homes where parents are Christians. This makes things pretty easy for them. But for those who come from non-Christian homes, there are often great difficulties. Some individuals find it very difficult to give up their drama or art, in those cases where they are told by the mission that they must abandon these if they want to be admitted into the church.

The question of marriage constitutes another grave problem to individuals. The African law permits polygamy, but the church does not countenance it in any form. Because of this a large number of people cannot be admitted to membership. A few years ago a denomination known as the African Church sprang up in Western Nigeria. This denomination accepts members who are either monogamist or polygamist. Without expressing any judgment of the value of this denomination, it should be pointed out that young Africans who join it do not do so in order to become polygamists. In a monogamous family it sometimes happens that a wife becomes a Christian while the husband does not, and this usually causes problems in the family.

There can be no doubt that the Christian church is coming to be regarded as one of the permanent institutions in southeastern Nigeria. The country will ever be grateful for the many good things that the missionaries have done; but unless the serious mistakes made during the past years are corrected, it will be impossible for the people to retain the good aspects of the culture of their country. One would like to see the church help-

ing the African toward his full development in his pursuit of truth, of knowledge, and of friendly relationships and good will to his fellow-man.

There is no question about freedom of worship in Nigeria. Freedom implies responsibility, and this responsibility makes it all the more important that sound leadership be provided for the young church of this area. The church must not place greatest importance upon the number of names on the membership roll, but upon the quality of life and of influence exerted by the members.

The splitting up of a community into a number of rival denominational churches is a weakness which can be remedied. Toward this end the churches should cooperate more and more in the future. There may be minor differences in teaching and interpretation of Scripture, but these should not interfere with the Christian way of living. After all, the gospel is concerned more with life than with doctrine.

The African should be given a chance to allow his new religion to determine his everyday life as much as the old religion did. A familiar saying in the modern business world is, "Business is business." Some of the methods used may not be fair throughout, but that often does not matter. The business man may be a "good" church member who salves his conscience by giving liberally to the work of the church. Now if one's religion permeates one's life, there will be no place for that sort of anomaly. The Christian faith to which the

African of today will cling should be so well presented that it will influence his whole life and culture.

It is impossible to give an exact picture of the Nigerian church of the future. One looks forward to a continuously strengthening organization; one that serves the needs of the people more and more effectively. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." These memorable words constitute the only admonition necessary to a successful Christian church, not only in Nigeria but in all of Africa.

THE JAPANESE CHURCH

THE JAPANESE CHURCH

Present Status, Problems, and Future Outlook

BY HACHIRO YUASA

JAPAN's first contact with Christianity took place in the middle of the sixteenth century when the great Franciscan missionary, Francis Xavier, landed in Kyushu.

In the course of the following fifty years, more than 300,000, including some daimyos and many samurais, were converted to the Christian faith through the heroic efforts of a succession of Roman Catholic missionaries. With the turn of the century, the church unfortunately began to come into conflict with the state, the relation finally precipitating the tragic Shimabara Rebellion. After this, the Japanese Catholics had to suffer the severest tests of oppression, persecution, and even martyrdom for the next two hundred and fifty years or so. These unfortunate historical experiences are not easily forgotten, and they influence the subsequent attitude of the people and the government toward Christianity, Protestant as well as Catholic. But they also give direction to new choices that will have to be made by Japanese Christians in the future.

PRESENT STATUS

The Young Protestant Church. Comparatively speaking, the church in Japan is very young. The first Protestant missionary reached the country from North America in 1859. The history of Protestant Christianity in Japan, therefore, is only eighty years old at most. The Restoration of the Meiji Era, the revolutionary processes which transformed feudal Japan into a modern state, began in 1868. Then the leaders were eager to learn the principles and techniques of Western civilization. The older religions having lost their dynamic influence, the people were ready to seek the new light and new spirit which activate the cultures of the West. This is the background which greeted the pioneer missionaries of the early Meiji. Being mostly men of exceptional qualities, these missionaries helped the people during the critical years in meeting their needs not only of the spiritual life but of the material world as well. Coupled with this tutorial contribution of the early missionaries, the fact that first contacts were primarily with the ambitious, patriotic young intellectuals who later became the leaders in various lines in new Japan, accounts for the large influence and prestige enjoyed by the church during this period. It also indicates the effective method of approach for the future.

The first indigenous Protestant church was organized in 1872 by a small but highly evangelistic group of native Christians in Yokohama. Since then the Christian

church has shared the eventful history of the nation itself.

The Church in Minority. In the course of the eighty years since the re-introduction of Christianity, the church has been growing at different rates in different periods of our national history. The present status may be surmised from the following figures taken from the Japan Christian Yearbook for 1938.

Total number of Protestant churches	1,926
Self-supporting churches	950
Pastors and evangelistic workers	2,796
Church members in 1936	210,330
Baptisms during the year	14,926
Contributions for all purposes	2,685,156 Yen
Total value of church properties	14,097,473 Yen
Number of Sunday schools	2,990
Sunday school teachers	10,975
Sunday school enrollment	176,347

These figures tell their own story, but I may point out the comparative popularity of the Sunday schools. The total number of Catholic membership is not known exactly, but it is considered somewhere around 100,000. On the basis of adult membership in the Protestant church, the present proportion of Christian to non-Christian Japanese is said to be, in round figures, one to four hundred—that is, one out of every four hundred Japanese is Christian. Christians in Japan are therefore overwhelmingly in the minority. This constitutes a serious challenge to evangelism. More than 70,000,000 Japanese people need to be evangelized.

The intrinsic strength of the church, however, cannot be gauged on the basis of these statistics, because of the high quality of the Japanese Christians from the point of view of education, social status, and leadership. Moreover, the majority of educated Japanese have a general understanding of Christianity, and many have appreciation of the teachings of Christ, although they are not willing to accept Christianity as their personal faith and join the church through baptism. In a sense Christianity has penetrated deeply into the thought and life of the nation. Possibly it is not an over-statement to say that Christianity today constitutes an integral element in the cultural heritage of the enlightened public in Japan.

Yet the very fact of numerical minority is a great handicap. In the face of the international crisis it becomes a fatal factor because of the lack of necessary weight and momentum when attempts are made to inject Christian principles into the solution of international difficulties. This accounts, in part at least, for the evident ineffectiveness of the Japanese Christians in the war situation.

The Mature Church. Young and in the minority as it is, the Japanese church is a mature church. It is mature because it has reached a certain stage of development and partial completion. The Japanese church is a mature church in that it is self-supporting. Japanese Christians financially support their churches to the same extent, yen to dollar, as American Christians in Greater New York support their churches. Considering the difference

in the financial resources of the two peoples, this fact speaks rather well for the devotion and sacrificial giving of Japanese Christians to the causes of the church.

Again, the Japanese church is a mature church because it is self-governing. Missionaries in Japan magnanimously relinquished their leadership to the native leaders many years ago, and indigenous workers have accepted their responsibilities for ministry and administrative work. We rejoice in the cooperative spirit that has produced this happy partnership with the missionaries; and the results are mutually satisfying.

Again, the Japanese church is a mature church because it is evangelistically minded; even under the difficult conditions existing at present it is carrying on its primary task of evangelism, as is well illustrated by the present three-year evangelistic campaign which is to cover the entire country from end to end, under the leadership of men such as Dr. Kagawa. We have missionary work now in the South Sea islands under Japanese mandate, and also in Manchukuo. The leaders are now seriously considering their newly imposed responsibility for evangelism on the Asiatic continent.

In this connection we may refer to the case of Christian educational institutions. Most of these institutions owe their inception and development to the missionaries and their friends, but today under native leadership they are accepting the challenge of educational responsibility for the nation, and have succeeded on the whole in producing virile Christian characters, in propagating Chris-

tian principles, and in advancing the causes of liberalism and democracy in Japan. The scholarship in Christian theology is beginning to become productive, as witnessed through the production of original works by the Japanese Christian scholars.

The recent passage by the Japanese government of the Religious Bodies Act, which purports to recognize Christianity as one of the three religions of Japan—right alongside of Buddhism and the Sect Shinto—speaks eloquently of the intrinsic strength of Christianity in Japan.

In the field of social work Christians took the lead during the Meiji period, and stimulated the government to be seriously and predominantly concerned with various social questions, including labor and social security problems. Practically all the reform work was initiated by the Christians. Christians still perform very important functions in solving social problems now current in the nation. Thanks to the leadership of Dr. Kagawa, the cooperative movement has become a potent factor in the economic life of the nation.

In spite of criticism, fair or unfair, directed against the Christian churches at present, Christianity has taken deep root in the spiritual life of the people. It is fair to state that Christianity commands the respect and confidence of the enlightened public commensurate with its past contributions. It simply cannot be ignored. It is a vital force in the life of the nation.

A Confused Church. In order to complete the picture of the church in Japan it is necessary to present another

aspect of its life and work in these trying days. The Japanese church may be characterized as a confused church. It is a confused church because we have unfortunately inherited from the West all the disadvantages of denominationalism. To most Japanese Christians denominationalism has less significance, smaller value, and therefore smaller attraction than it may have in the West. At any rate, denominational divisions are signs of weakness and not strength.

Again, the Japanese church suffers from conflicting currents in modern theology. Japan is a country where the Christian thinking of Europe and America find their opposing proponents. This draws lines of division among the churches and also among the congregations. American activism as well as Continental eschatology find their followers among the native Christians. This situation does not necessarily work for the unity of the Christian church.

The Japanese church is also divided in its social outlook. The social program of the church suffers from this divided outlook. Also I am compelled to confess that the social consciousness of the Japanese church cannot be said to be very acute or enlightened. On political issues, or application of Christian principles in the sphere of political activities, the Japanese church is again a confused church. The present international crisis caught the church unprepared. The Japanese leaders must penitently assume the responsibility for this glaring neglect. The question of pacifism is one of the un-

touched problems of the Japanese church. Conscientious objectors, if there are any—and no one denies the possibility of their existence—are not in evidence, and they are still less organized. Certainly there is no organized peace movement as such, although I am fully convinced that Japanese Christians are as much peace-minded as the Christians of the West. Possibly it is more appropriate to state that the Japanese Christians hold a variety of opinions and positions, and the church represents a cross section of the nation in regard to such great issues as war and peace. After all, it is no easy task to live up to the high Christian standard of life, as individuals, as a church, and as a nation. In these senses the Japanese church is a confused church.

A Penitent Church. The Japanese church is a penitent church. It is painfully conscious of its shortcomings, and its sins of commission and omission. The Madras conference was a penitent conference, and the Japanese delegation was one of the most penitent representatives of a penitent church. It cannot be otherwise, considering the reality of the present life of the world.

PRESENT PROBLEMS

The Ecumenical Church. The Madras meeting rediscovered the *Una Sancta* or Church Universal. This was the fundamental theme of that great conference. A real sense of the Church Universal, however, needs to be cultivated throughout the world. The Japanese church needs this sense of ecumenical fellowship because it is a church

in minority and because it is confronted with the gigantic task of Christianizing national and international orders with such meager equipment and force. Only through sharing the community of faith and hope are the Japanese Christians able to keep fighting their lone battle in that part of the world. For the problems of the Japanese church are after all problems of the ecumenical church, and their solution therefore must be sought internationally. How to make this central concept of the ecumenical church a reality with our Christians is one of the vital problems for our Christian leaders.

Evangelism. The Madras conference was in a sense a turning point in the history of world evangelism in that it emphasized the bi-lateral relation of the missionary task. Hitherto we have spoken of sending and receiving churches, as if missionaries were to come from the West to the East invariably, and the East were always to receive and never to reciprocate in the exchange of messengers of the gospel. But Madras discovered that the churches in the so-called mission lands have reached that state of maturity at which they are ready to send missionaries to share the common faith founded on common Christian experience. They are ready to participate in the missionary activities of the world. And the Japanese church hopes to contribute its share to the Christian heritage of the world. It is already sending missionaries to the South Seas and to the Asiatic continent. It is no longer content just to receive missionaries from

the West. A new day is dawning. A new field is to be cultivated. But how?

Educational Institutions. The Christian educational institutions in Japan are confronted with the serious problem of nationalism as well as internationalism. Needless to say, their two-fold function needs to be strengthened. They are primarily educational institutions; therefore their educational technique, equipment, outlook, should represent the best in the field. But we should never forget that they are Christian institutions. We shall not be satisfied to have them just first-rate educational institutions. They must be definitely Christian. In the practical working out of these two functions much remains to be desired. The present international crisis is adding more difficulties, and the Christian educators have tremendous handicaps to overcome in attaining their goals. It is not so much that they lack ideals, but the difficulties arise from the more practical realms of finance and a trained staff.

Also the relation between the church and the schools is a standing difficulty. How to relate the life of the schools to the program of the church is a problem which in Japan, as everywhere else, remains to be solved. There is no Christian normal school in Japan; therefore all the certified teachers available for Christian schools are graduates of government schools where Christianity receives no adequate attention. That is one of the difficulties for the Christian school when it tries to Christianize its faculty. Especially in the fields of science and

Oriental culture this problem of securing Christian teachers becomes a difficult one.

More fundamentally, the church at present maintains little or no vital relation with the so-called Christian schools and colleges. Many of the large institutions with thousands of students are confronted with the serious task of infusing Christian influence among the non-Christian majority of the student body, with a meager staff, under the government restriction which does not allow the teaching of Christianity as a religion in school—as is true also in American schools.

Financial Problems. The annual budget for the Christian activities of the Japanese church comes from the native contributions, which supply only one half of what is needed, the other half being contributed by friends abroad. This point is not fully realized by the native Christians, for they think that they are already taxed heavily for the support of their churches. Inadequate financial support explains to a certain extent their difficulties in maintaining better schools, improving their educational programs, furthering their social programs, and in general making Christianity a more potent factor in the life of the people. How to cultivate greater financial resources for the church is one of the major problems for the native leaders. It is not necessarily solved by simply trying to educate the members in sacrificial giving, for they are already giving rather liberally. Effort must be directed in some other directions. Needless to add that the problem of finance, serious as it is, is not

the fundamental problem, but it is vital as a means to an end. Efficient service cannot be expected without adequate financial support.

Church Union. The question of church union is a standing program with the church in Japan. It is highly interesting to recall the fact that the first church organized in the country, in 1872, was interdenominational, with a remarkable sense of ecumenical fellowship transcending the barriers of creedal differences, denominational divisions, or sectarian distinctions. Various attempts have been made in the past to realize church union. The National Christian Council of Japan at present has a standing committee for the sole purpose of bringing about church union; it has drafted a constitution and even agreed on the name of the proposed united church. Still there is much ground to be covered before actual union can be consummated. In the meantime our churches are cooperating very fully in their evangelistic work, and whenever the united voice of the church is needed, leaders find no difficulty in bringing the forces in the field to order in close and most friendly cooperation. Christianity is then a united force in its relation to other religions. However, there is the question of relationship with some small and, may I say, dubious evangelistic sects which maintain a small force, a few stations, or even a single station in Japan. The outlook and program of such a sect is very different from that of Christianity as a whole; yet the fact that they too are called Christian creates unfortunate confusion in the

mind of the general public as well as of the authorities.

Another controversy confronts the Protestant church—the delicate problem of its relation to the Roman Catholic church. This is intensified because of the tragic historical experiences of Catholicism in Japan mentioned earlier in this paper. It may be added here that because of the political expediency obtaining under the present international crisis, the Catholic church seems to have gained in prestige, and the Catholic missionaries are coming in from Italy, increasing gradually, every boat reaching Japan now bringing in Italian priests and nuns. Whenever the Protestant missionaries are withdrawn or Protestant stations are given up for one reason or another, these vacancies are almost invariably reoccupied by the incoming Catholic missionaries. This creates a problem of its own. Cases are reported of re-conversion of Protestants to the Catholic church.

At any rate, there is no question that Christianity should present a united front, because the church in Japan is challenged today by the organized and unorganized non-Christian forces in the nation. Church union, if it can be consummated without losing the loyalty and vitality inherent in the denominational churches, is a problem for the solution of which all efforts should be concentrated.

The Missionary. Japanese Christians owe an everlasting debt of gratitude to the missionaries and their friends who have brought the supreme gift of God—Christ—to Japan. Credit for Christianity in Japan be-

longs to those magnificent groups of missionaries who, through their sacrificial service, have succeeded in planting the church of Christ in our country. In the heyday of missionary activities we had more than 1,200 missionaries on the field. For one reason or another the number has been gradually decreased year after year. To-day we have fewer than 850 missionaries in Japan. This gradual withdrawal is partly due to the development of the native church, the native indigenous leaders replacing the missionaries. But when we think of the missionaries in their complete modern significance, this decrease presents a serious problem for the future of the Japanese church. As I said before, more than 70,000,000 people are still to be evangelized. This task still needs missionary help. Although the native Christians are willing and are carrying on as best they can, financially and otherwise they are inadequate to cope with the situation.

Undoubtedly Japan is one of the storm centers of the world. Where there is a storm, there is power. Whether this power be used in a Christian way of reconciliation and reconstruction nationally and internationally, or whether it be used in competitive, destructive ways depends much on the redeeming activity of the Christian church. The great constructive efforts of the last eighty years should not be impaired at this critical period. If anything, they should be strengthened with every possible means. This is no time to speak of retrenchment or evacuation of the missionary field. I believe it is a problem both for the native church and the church of the

West, to whom the credit for the past achievement mainly belongs.

Needless to say, the leaders are trying their best to meet the emergency needs created by the partial withdrawal of missionaries or by the decrease in financial support from the West. But in the name of the ecumenical church, practical problems such as these demand close scrutiny on the part of the Western church as well as the Japanese church. The missionary problem may perhaps be considered as assuming a new significance in that it is becoming a give-and-take proposition between the churches anywhere and everywhere. In this sense there should be no end to the missionary sending.

Ideology. Japan suffers intensely because of her sensitivity to world currents of thought. Whatever grips the imagination of the Western people is sooner or later reflected in the thinking of the Japanese public. Socialism, democracy, communism, nationalism, totalitarianism, and what-not have impinged on the consciousness of thinking Japan, often creating confusion from which the public suffers. The native church seems to have failed to produce sufficient strength to withstand the onslaught of these devastating ideological storms. There was communism, for example, which swept through the country like a titanic hurricane for ten or more years during the period preceding the present period of ultranationalism, an ideology which again reflects a worldwide rise of nationalism in the modern age. We suffered an intense period of excruciating confusion and insecurity.

ity during the period of Marxian storm, when the church scholars were apparently impotent to resist, still less to overcome, the destructive philosophy of Marxism by their own philosophy of Christianity. This illustrates another type of serious problem confronting the Japanese church, the solution of which must depend on the development of Christian scholarship and thinking everywhere. It also illustrates the community of problems with the church in the West, because the problems are common to both and more often than not the solutions are found more easily in the West than in the East where there are so many handicaps to be overcome.

The Shrine Problem. The so-called shrine problem demands careful study. It is subject to misapprehension, misunderstanding, and misrepresentation. The shrine problem is often misconstrued as though it represented a state of religious persecution, denial of freedom of worship, or a compulsion of religious worship of heathen gods. Common decency and fairness to the Japanese authorities as well as to Christians demand that the issues should be clarified and adequate appraisal of the practical difficulties involved be given.

It is often reported in the West that the Christians in Japan are compelled by the government to worship at the Shinto shrines in violation of the freedom of conscience. This is neither an accurate nor adequate statement. There are two branches of Shinto, one sectarian and therefore definitely religious, and the other official or state, which is by official definition non-religious.

This distinction is all-important because much misunderstanding arises from ignoring this very fact. What is expected of citizens of the country is to pay ceremonial visits to the state Shinto shrines at certain specific occasions as an expression of their patriotism and loyalty to the Emperor. This does not involve an act of worship in a religious sense. It may be said rather to have the same significance as the flag ritual, for example, in America. Unfortunately there have been many factors creating confusion both on the part of the authorities and of the people, and the foreign observers have often intensified the difficulties by contributing their share of misunderstanding. The real nature of the problem may be noted from the following statement prepared by the Japanese delegation to the Madras conference:

In regard to the problem of required attendance at the shrines of state Shinto, our National Christian Council, after prolonged study, placed itself on record as accepting the interpretation of the Government that these ceremonies are patriotic and educational in character.

The problem however is not devoid of difficulties. There are still religious implications in some of these ceremonies and practices. The Council therefore is pressing for the early elimination of these religious elements.

In all its pronouncements on this question the Government consistently maintains that obeisance at these shrines is in essence the fulfilment of a civic obligation, which has for its purpose the fullest possible realization of national solidarity.

The difference between these state shrines and those of religious Shinto should be kept clearly in mind. At-

tendance at the shrines of religious Shinto is as voluntary as attendance at the services of a Buddhist temple or a Christian church.

In order to avoid confusion regarding this in the minds of the people, the Government has placed the administration of the state Shinto shrines under the Department of Home Affairs, and those who officiate at these shrines are civil officials. Religious Shinto however is under the Department of Education in the same way as Buddhism, Christianity and other religions, and its priests are religious functionaries.

I am not suggesting that the problem has been solved to the satisfaction of all concerned. Far from it. But the immediate solution must be sought in reasonable concession on those non-essentials which are often simply matters of expression rather than of principle. The fundamental problems of theology of Shinto of course need most careful study. It constitutes a part of the major problem of church and state. This requires time, and full time should be given to it. It cannot be and should not be hastened unduly. Least of all should it be attempted under the abnormal conditions of wartime.

Church and State. The challenges arising from the emergence of a new paganism add difficulties in solving the ever recurring problem of church and state. The nature and import of this fundamental problem assume peculiar seriousness in Japan because of its unique national history and institutions. Before a solution can be found, much study is required. In fact it constitutes the major problem of the church in Japan for years to come.

Social and Economic Orders. The Japanese church as a whole has no social program as such. This statement may seem misleading in the light of the contributions Christians have made in the past in the realm of various social reforms, of political progress, and of economic movements such as that of the cooperatives. It is true that individually some of our churches and their members have been active along these lines, some even taking the initiative. It is again true that the churches in their denominational conferences and annual meetings have registered from time to time their social concern in terms of social manifestoes. But their efforts often ended right there, and practically nothing has come out of their splendid pronouncements. What is evidently needed is education of church members in regard to the social and economic problems in order to condition them for appropriate and effective Christian action. Institutes, conferences, literature, and trained leaders are needed badly in this connection. This is particularly important because of the recommendations of the Madras conference which recognized the vital necessity of Christianizing the social and economic orders which are unquestionably unchristian at present.

The International Order. In the sphere of the international order, the Japanese church is confronted with the most difficult and at the same time most important test from the standpoint of practical Christianity. How to Christianize the international order is of course one of the major problems confronting the ecumenical church

today. How to bring the Christian influence to bear upon the unchristian international relations now prevailing everywhere in the world is a most serious concern of enlightened Christians everywhere. In this regard the Japanese church has yet to go a long way in enlightening and conditioning Christians to live up to the Christian principles. Here again only a long-range program of education will suffice to meet the need of the church. The problems of war and peace are problems for the Japanese church as well as for the ecumenical church. No one will deny the handicaps under which the Japanese Christians have to labor and suffer, but the very difficulty constitutes our responsibility. If the church is to have a real message for the redemption of the people, it must undoubtedly speak the truth and walk in the light of Christ, cost what it may. Here is the crucial test for the church in Japan yet to be met.

FUTURE OUTLOOK

It is not given to anyone to prophesy the future of the church in Japan. It is evident that the church is undergoing tremendously chastising experiences because of the life and death struggle in which the nation is involved at present. The outline of the emerging new international order in Eastern Asia is beyond human prediction. One thing, however, is certain. The church is bound to share the future of the nation. It is significant that Christian leaders such as Dr. Kagawa think that the fate of Christianity depends on what is done and not

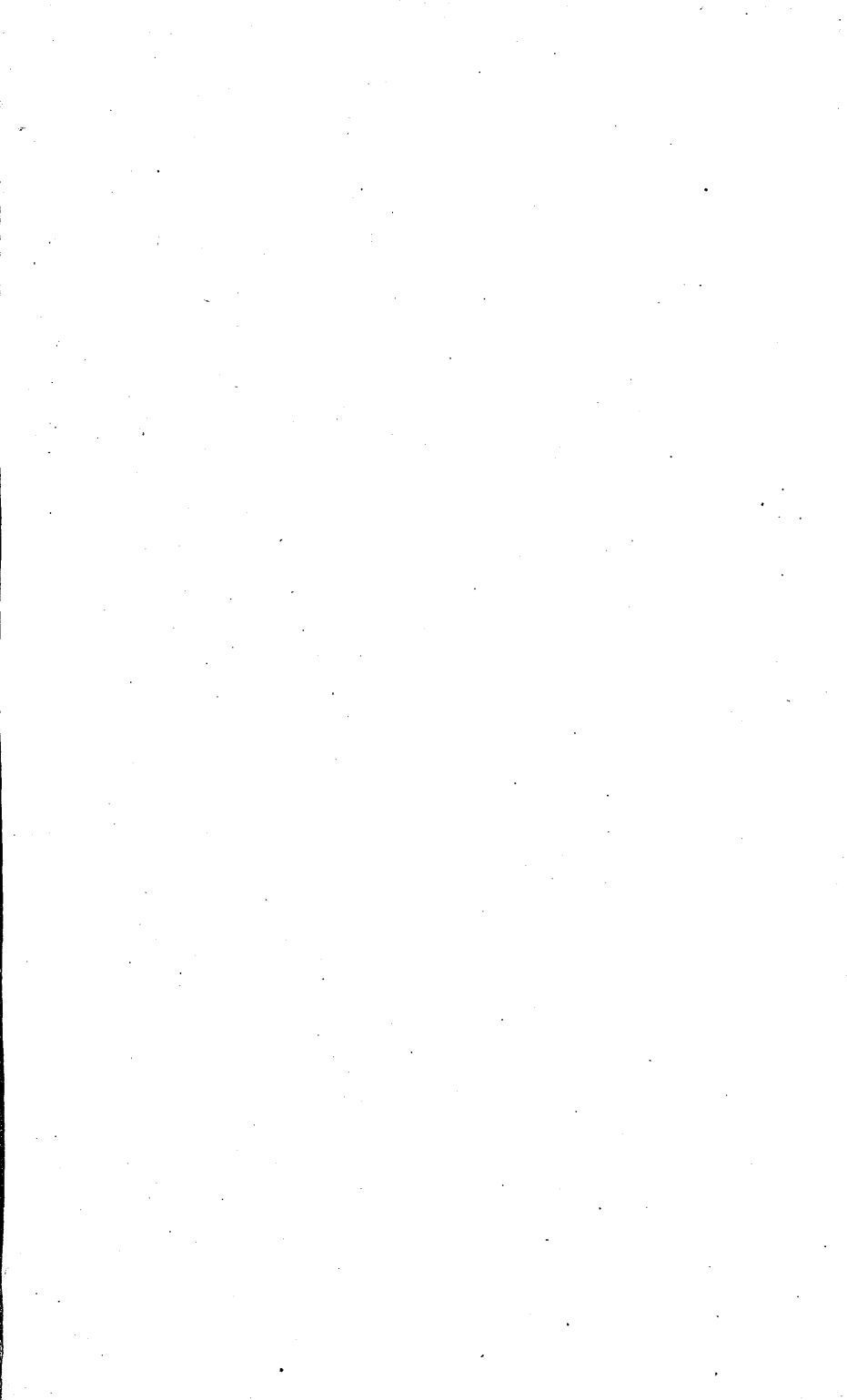
done to the church, both from within and without, in the course of the next ten years.

There is an essential fact we must remember. The church has taken root in Japan. Christianity is already an integral element in the spiritual heritage of the Japanese people. No matter what happens, it cannot be annihilated. The real question is whether the Japanese church is going to continue to be dynamic and to grow in service and prestige for the cause of the kingdom of God, or is going to become static and impotent, the form remaining but the spirit departed. This island nation which has reached a stage of national development where it has become continent-conscious for the first time in its history is bound to play a very important and probably determining role in the near future of the Asiatic continent. It needs and needs desperately the Christian message and ministry if it is to become a constructive power in the life of the twentieth-century world. This is the real spiritual challenge of the new Japan.

Among the numerous adjustments Japan must learn to make because of the changes taking place in the fields of social, economic, political and cultural relations of the world, the problem of church and state and that of war and peace stand out particularly as having direct and fundamental bearing on the life and work of the church. By their very nature the Japanese Christians, who are as yet in such minority and burdened with many handicaps, cannot be expected to solve these problems single-handed. It is only reasonable for them to

look toward the churches of the West which have incomparably greater resources as well as greater advantages, to work out practical solutions of these major problems in their own countries, and then, through their examples of Christianity in action, help the church in Japan to solve its similar problems. This is the best way to make the ecumenical fellowship a reality.

In the name of the Church Universal, this challenge is laid at the door of the church in America.



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